A MAY FLOWER MAID

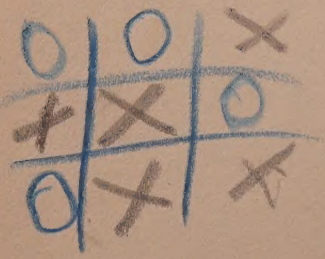
E·B·KNIPE & A·A·KNIPE

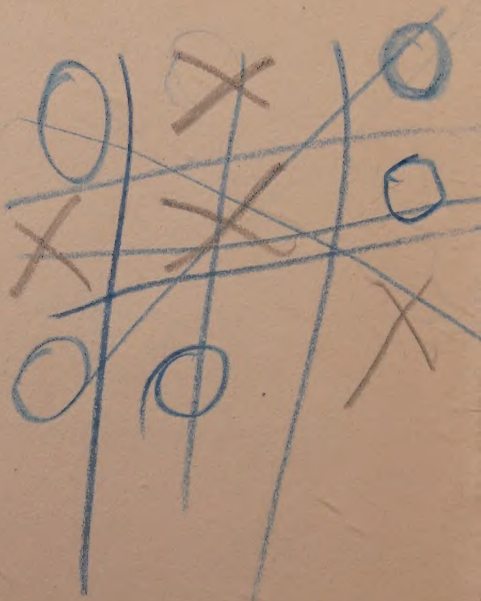
For Miss Joyce. from the
Sims children and their Dad

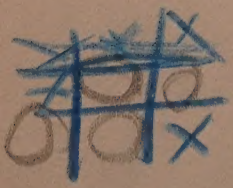
W. S. Sims

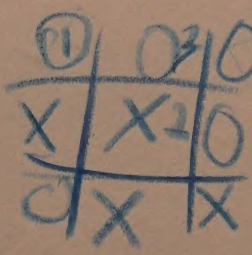
London
June 12, 1921.

A MAYFLOWER MAID









Priscilla and John Alden

A MAYFLOWER MAID

BY
EMILIE BENSON KNIPE
AND
ALDEN ARTHUR KNIPE

ILLUSTRATED BY
EMILIE BENSON KNIPE

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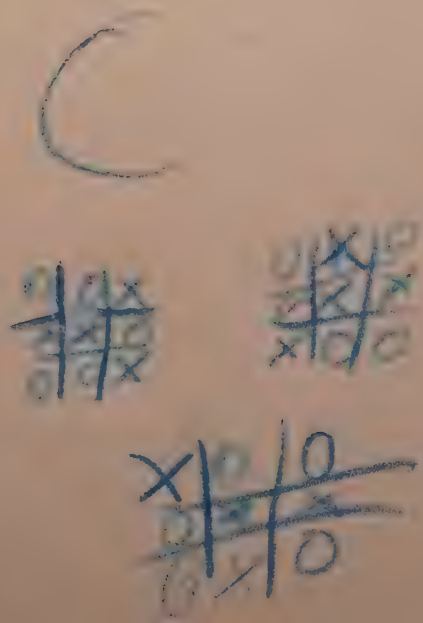


A MAYFLOWER MAID

A MAYFLOWER MAID

CHAPTER I

A TIMOROUS MAID

"THE *Mayflower* is the greater vessel. I would that we were assigned to it instead of the *Speedwell!*"

The girl spoke timorously. It was evident that she held the voyage ahead of her in dread.

"Would that I were going on either!" her friend exclaimed. "You are a favorite of fortune, Barbary."

"You call me so," Barbara Gorges returned, with some show of spirit, "but in truth I see no good hap in this wild adventure. We Puritans worship here in the Netherlands as God wills. Why may we not rest content with this freedom?"

"Because we be husbandmen for the most part. Here we must learn trades or starve. Moreover we have no surety that our freedom will continue, for the English may not suffer us to abide in peace for long."

Barbara shuddered, and stood for a moment gazing out of the cottage window; but she saw not the clean streets nor the neat row of Dutch houses before her.

Her thoughts went back to the days of her early childhood when her parents, fleeing the wrath of King James the First, left their native land with others of a band of Puritans. These simple people had sacrificed their fortunes, given up their homes and quitted England in order that they might worship God according to their consciences. But ere they reached the hospitable Low Lands they were forced to bear the ridicule and persecution of their enemies, and the little maid in the arms of her frail mother had never been able to rid herself of the horror and torment of those fearful days.

"Dost remember what befell when we left England?" she asked the girl beside her. "I sometimes think 't was that made a craven of me. Babe though I was, I screamed with the others when the horsemen charged down upon us on the heath at the mouth of the Humber, cutting us off from the boats."

"They harmed ye not," Charity Towle insisted. "Why, then, nourish a fearful remembrance of them?"

"I know not," Barbara acknowledged. "I was too small to reason; but 't is said fear is infectious. My mother and the other females, separated from their protectors, thought they heard death calling to them."

"And were they not proud to be martyrs for their faith?" Charity's tone betrayed her astonishment.

Barbara shook her head.

"They were wives and mothers," she replied. "Indeed 't was not for themselves they feared, but for their children and their husbands."

"Yet even the British Magistrates could find no crime in the wish of a woman to cleave to her husband," Charity rejoined complacently. "Nor could they send back to their homes those who had no homes to go to."

"Aye, they set us free," Barbara nodded, "and, in the end, we won through to Amsterdam. But those days of dread have left their mark upon me. No one in all Leyden is so fearful as I am. I fly from my own shadow and, verily, I know not how I will endure to live in the strange land to which we go, filled as it is with tigers, lions, dragons, venomous serpents, and wild Indians, more deadly than all the other perils."

"You 've been talking to Peregrine," Charity replied. "I shall box that boy's ears for this, the next time I can lay hands on him. He is naughty, and jealous that you go before we do. His tales are all windy lies, made up out of his wicked head."

"Nay it is not so," Barbara returned earnestly. "Your brother had it all from an honest seaman at Delfes Haven, who had, already, many times made the voyage to Hudsons River. Indeed he showed Peregrine the mark on his arm where, a serpent having stung him, he was miraculously healed by a dragon, which breathed flames upon the wound and so burnt out the poison, leaving behind a picture of itself to testify to his truth."

"A miraculous healing indeed!" returned Charity contemptuously. "I know not which is the greater babe, Peregrine or you, to swallow such tales and open

your mouths for more. Forget your fears, or, better yet, pray to be delivered from them." She rose to go.

"I do! In truth I do! I pray till I 'm quite cold and stiff, yet it doth no manner of good."

"These brick floors are chilling to the knees," Charity agreed, gravely.

"And hard!" Barbara put in. "Yet I think it not right to use a cushion —."

"A cushion!" Charity interrupted, genuinely shocked. "Indeed not! That would be a sinful indulgence."

Abashed at having even hinted at so base a luxury Barbara accompanied her friend to the door, where Charity paused for a moment.

"Have you told your father of your dread of this voyage?" she asked.

Barbara shook her head.

"I dare not," she said, briefly. "I fear him more than lions and tigers!"

"Aye, in truth he is a stern man," Charity spoke musingly. "But I cannot think he would constrain you were you to ask leave to remain here."

"You do not know him," Barbara said. "Even my gentle mother feared him, though she begged me, ere she died, not to judge him too harshly. She explained that he was not always thus, but that his nature had been soured by mistreatment at the hands of our kinsman, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who is Governor of Portsmouth. Thou knowest, Charity, that in Eng-

land we were a family of importance, with a goodly fortune to satisfy all our desires; but, fearing he would be attainted for his faith, my father entrusted his patrimony to Sir Ferdinando, who will not give it up; and my father doth brood upon this injury."

"'T will bring him no nearer its recovery to have thee unhappy in thy mind," Charity insisted.

"Nay, tempt me not to ask for what I know I cannot gain," Barbara protested. "For me there is no escape. I must go to North Virginia with the others. The more I shrink from it, the greater will he conceive the need of my soul for the discipline."

"Haply it is so," Charity agreed, for such a line of reasoning was quite familiar; "though, were I you, I would beg Mr. Robinson's opinion in the matter ere I gave up hope."

Barbara shook her head more emphatically than ever.

"My father would ne'er believe that even our good minister knew the requirements of my nature better than he doth," she replied. "Moreover, I myself hold it to be a duty to go with him in my mother's stead, to make a home for him in the Jerusalem of the New World. Yet I cannot still my fears that the *Speedwell* is a very little boat for such a great adventure."

"There is no doubt she is seaworthy," Charity comforted the girl. "There was some difficulty in finding fit boats; but those having the matter in hand would never accept aught but the best. Rest assured of that!"

"You are a true friend, Charity, thus to hearten

me," Barbara spoke gratefully. "Yet I fear there is none living who can give me what I lack. Coward I am, and coward I shall die!"

"Talk not of death," said Charity, snapping her fingers to ward off evil spirits, an action which, had any of her elders chanced to see her, would have brought her swift chastisement for daring to hold to a Popish superstition. "'T is a wonderful new life you are going to find across the main. I would I were leaving this Babylon with you."

"I would that you were!" Barbara agreed, as the two friends parted; Charity to hasten home through the pebbled streets of Leyden; Barbara to set about the preparation of her father's dinner.

John Gorges soon came in and sat himself down at the table in the best of humors. He hurried through his grace before meat and then filled his wooden bowl generously with savory stew from the trencher set in the middle of the table.

"Food tastes good after the fast! My heart rejoiceth that our delivery from the house of bondage is near," he exclaimed, a moment later.

"Have King James and his Ministers acceded to our petition for freedom to serve the Lord in the wilderness?" Barbara asked timidly.

"Not they!" replied her father, with his mouth full. "His heart is as hard as was the heart of Pharaoh of Egypt, but, like the Israelites, we go forth trusting in the Lord our God. Tomorrow we go to Delfes Haven and our passage of the sea begins!"

"Tomorrow!" cried Barbara, unable to conceal the terror in her voice.

Her father stopped eating and regarded her sternly.

"I have been one of the most forward in urging this undertaking," he said, his tone hardening. "Let there be no faint-heartedness in my own household, for I will not countenance it!" He rapped sharply on the table and Barbara, who had drooped her head at his harsh words, was constrained to look him in the eyes.

"You hear me, girl," he went on. "I will not be put to shame by you. I have not been blind to your mopish ways and your lack of good-will; but I am still master here. An you lack zeal in our Cause, see that your speech bewrayeth you not, for I am no patient man to be made a mock of before our congregation."

"I had no thought to shame thee," Barbara returned meekly. "I would that I had inherited thy dauntless spirit; but, as thou well knowest, I am as timid as a mouse."

Her father grunted and spoke half to himself.

"I know not why I should be afflicted with a puling maid when I need a lusty son at my side."

"Leave me behind, then!" cried Barbara, plucking up a little courage. "I can go out to service. I would not be a drag upon you an you want me not."

Her father looked upon her much as he would have looked upon a tame cat which had turned and scratched him, but strange to say he was pleased by her resentment.

"Now that is the first sign of a proper pride that

ever you showed!" He exclaimed approvingly. "Belike there 's metal in you somewhere . . . You go with me," he went on, after an instant's pause. "'T is the Lord's will that you are what you are, I have no right to rebel from the cross laid upon me. Nor ever again let me hear talk of your going into service. You are well-born and some day I mean to come to grips with my cousin Fernando who hath despoiled me."

He pushed back his chair, having made a hasty though a hearty meal as he talked.

"You have set ready the utensils and clothing I commanded?"

Barbara, not able to speak for the lump in her throat, nodded her head and pointed to the pile.

"Good!" her father said. "We will victual at South Hampton, and there can supply any deficiencies we may feel; but I have taken the best advice in this matter and think we will find no lack of aught that is needful."

With a curt nod he left the room and the house. Barbara, who had not eaten a mouthful, looked at the food before her with loathing. As she had known all along, it was useless to rebel. Indeed, such was her nature, that had her father signified his intention of leaving her behind, she straightway would have been overwhelmed by fears of what would become of her, cast among strangers.

She pushed the bowl away and, laying her arms on the table, buried her face in them.

She was not weeping, although her attitude was

He changed his mind and tiptoed from the room

mournful in the extreme; but she was so deep in thought that she did not hear a knock on the door. An instant later a man entered, stepping lightly within the room. He was short and muscular, quick and lithe in all his movements, and in his bearing there was a certain hint of gaiety.

He glanced at the bowed figure at the table and the smile on his rather boyish face slowly faded, giving place to a look of sympathetic understanding. He opened his lips to speak; then, on a sudden, changed his mind and tiptoed out of the house, closing the door softly behind him.

A moment later a sharper blow upon the knocker brought Barbara to her senses and she hurried to admit the stranger.

"I am Myles Standish, late officer of His Majesty's Army," the man announced in a hearty voice. "Canst tell me where I may find Master John Gorges?"

"My father hath just set forth," Barbara replied. "I know not whither."

"Now that's too bad," Standish returned, "for I have business with him, and counted upon talking it over whilst we ate."

Barbara had heard of Myles Standish and knew, that while he was not a member of the congregation, he yet was looked upon as well-affected and a desirable addition to their party should he decide to join it. So her hesitation was only momentary ere she said:

"At least I can see that you go not hungry from our

door. I pray you be seated while I hot-up the stew. I am my own maid-servant, so you will hold me excused if I leave you for a moment."

Standish accepted her invitation and seated himself at the table, while Barbara hurried to the kitchen to return ere long, with the smoking stew. She set down the trencher, cut bread from the loaf and filled a mug with good home-brewed beer; then a little uncertain as to her duties as hostess, was about to leave him to his own devices with the stew, when he stopped her, pointing to her empty bowl.

"But you have not eaten," he said gravely. "Do not let me drive you from your meat. An you will not join me I must take myself off." He half rose from his chair as he spoke.

"I — I was not hungered," the girl faltered, yet she seated herself and allowed the visitor to help her to a little of the stew.

"You have doubtless heard that we sail on the morrow?" Standish began, eyeing her keenly as he spoke. He guessed the reason for the despair to which he had been an involuntary witness, and sought to allay it.

Barbara nodded her head.

"But I knew not that you were to go with the company," she returned, feeling the need to say something.

"Yes, the adventure is to my liking," he replied. "'T is my wife, poor girl, who is in tears over it. She feareth everything! If whales do not swallow us, like Jonah, then the cannibals will."

"Oh!" cried Barbara, clasping her hands in despair.

"Then, 't is true that it is a land of cannibals?"

Her terror was so manifest that Standish pitied her.

"Nothing of the sort, child," he said, with much assurance. "I 've seen some of these Indians in England. They seem a gentle, timid folk enough. If dealt with fairly, I fear no trouble with them."

"What do you fear, then?" Barbara asked, determined to know the worst of this expedition.

Standish smiled and took a long pull at the mug.

"In truth I know not," he answered frankly. "'T is my way to face my enemies boldly and have them by the throat ere they have time to intimidate me."

"But you could not seize the throat of a fire-breathing dragon!" faltered the girl.

A peal of laughter interrupted her.

"Now that is a mad tale to fright a maid, withal," Standish said. "The dragon is a fabulous beast, my dear. Do not worry your young head with such inventions. You are like my Rose, too ready to believe each witless rumor. I vow I cannot see the pleasure some find in affrighting the innocent!" he added, half angrily.

"Doth it not shame you," Barbara asked, "that your wife should have such fears? I am greatly put to it to conceal my timorousness, for my father holds that my half-heartedness is a disgrace to him."

Standish shrugged his shoulders after the foreign manner.

"I married a woman, not a man-at-arms," he returned. "I hold a certain timidity becoming in a

female. Fret not yourself about such fears, my child. Haply you brood too much upon your own weakness and thus magnify it in your mind."

"Alack," sighed Barbara, "I am so pitiful a coward that the sudden clapping-to of a door maketh me to start like a hare. I fear the dark. I shudder at the slimy slithering of a snake and the sight of blood sends mine trickling through my veins like melted snow. And to cap all, I dread my father's just contempt of my poltroonery."

Myles Standish having eaten rose to go.

"I have ever found that he that goeth half-way to meet trouble is sure to find it; while he who standeth his ground and fronts the whole world boldly is little like to be meddled with." He spoke a trifle gruffly, having, in truth, a great pity for the girl before him, who seemed over-tender for the rough life ahead of her. "Were I your father I should be well-content with my daughter, and so I shall tell him when I see him."

"You could not be my father! You are too young," Barbara smiled at the idea, picturing in her mind this alert young man against her stern and forbidding father.

"I am older than I look, mayhap," Standish answered, with a twinkle in his bright eyes, "but you, I take it, have seen scarce a dozen years."

"I 'm fourteen," Barbara replied indignantly, whereat Standish concealed a smile as he thanked her for her entertainment and took his leave.

The girl watched through the window as he strode away. In the up-standing, rugged figure there was a promise of strength and power that greatly comforted Barbara.

"He could not be my father," she murmured, shaking her head, "but were he my elder brother, haply he might hearten me till I ceased to shiver for very shame at my craven fears."

CHAPTER II

THE *SPEEDWELL* SAILETH

THE short time before their departure passed quickly. There were many last things to be done, and Barbara had few opportunities to let her thoughts dwell upon the imaginary terrors she anticipated. Not all the congregation at Leyden could be accommodated on the vessels engaged for this first voyage. It was planned that the *Speedwell,* a small craft, was to sail from Delfes Haven with a contingent from the Low Lands and at Southampton would meet the *Mayflower* carrying a company from London.

The two boats had quarters for scarce half of those in Holland alone and therefore it had been determined that the Reverend Master John Robinson, their pious minister, should remain behind to come later with the rest of his flock, and that this first adventure should be led by their wise teacher and ruling elder, Master William Brewster. Thus it came about that there were many farewells to be said and, on the eve of their departure, the prospective travelers were entertained and feasted at Master Robinson's large house on the Klock-Steeg. Psalms were sung and Barbara was in a measure comforted, for so many tears were shed that her weeping passed unnoted and she escaped her

father's chiding which was what she dreaded most in the world.

At Delfes Haven, whither nearly the entire congregation fared by canal, another feast was spread in honor of the departing Pilgrims. Master Robinson blessed them and with fervent words asked protection from on high for the enterprise. But it was with heavy hearts and tear-filled eyes that the final goodbys were said.

Charity Towle took Barbara in her arms at the last. "I cannot speak from abundance of sorrow to part," she murmured.

They kissed, and in a sort of daze Barbara boarded the *Speedwell* with her shipmates.

With the others the girl stood at the waistboards until the tide called them away. Only after the sails had been hoisted and the little vessel was in motion did she realize that she had been too overcome with emotion to remember to stuff her fingers in her ears when a volley of small shot was loosed in honor of their departure, and too filled with woe to cringe at the report of the three pieces of ship's ordnance that answered the salute from the shore.

But, ere Southampton was reached, where they were to meet their consort the *Mayflower,* Barbara's fears revived. She, in common with most of the passengers, suffered greatly from seasickness, due not only to the motion of their small craft but also to the overcrowded condition in which they found themselves. Moreover, the arrangements for their provisions were most inade-

quate; the bread-room, in especial, being so poorly arranged that they lost much of their supplies through the depredations of rats; and these discomforts at the very start of what they knew would be a long and tedious voyage served to depress their spirits, already shaken by secret thoughts of vague terrors.

John Gorges, a shrewd and capable man, noted these things with an appraising eye. Possibly he repented of his resolve to take his little daughter with him upon this doubtful pilgrimage, for he spoke with her in a more kindly manner.

"Lose not thy courage, daughter," he said. "At Southampton we shall meet our greater vessel and many of our company will be transferred to her.

"That will indeed give us more breathing space," cried Barbara.

"Aye, and those who scorned advice before will listen now to reason," her father went on. "I warned them that our number was too great; but they heeded me not."

When Southampton was reached there was a mighty bustling among those who must go ashore. Even the short voyage from Delfes Haven had been long enough to prove how many forgotten things were necessary to their mere existence, and none was more eager to land than John Gorges.

"I go to meet the agents of our cousin, Sir Fernando?" he confided to Barbara. "I cannot rid myself of the belief that the man will yet treat me with justice."

"Oh, he must," Barbara said hopefully. She was sure that if this matter of their patrimony were once adjusted, her father would regain the more kindly spirit he was wont to show in earlier days.

"I would that I could meet him face to face," John Gorges muttered under his breath. "I 'se warrant he would hear a word of truth he sore needs! But it cannot be. It cannot be!"

While her father was ashore, Barbara came up on the deck of the *Speedwell* to escape the foul air below, and found a place for herself in the bows. From here she could look at the *Mayflower,* anchored not far away, and to her it seemed a great vessel as she compared it with the tiny craft upon which she stood.

"Upon so large a ship I should not fear at all," she thought, and was rather envious of those who were preparing to transfer their belongings to the other craft. But John Gorges and his daughter had been told off to remain aboard the *Speedwell* and she had no hope that her unspoken desire would be gratified.

Ere she expected him Barbara's father returned, and as she noted the black humor portrayed on his forbidding countenance her heart sank. He came to her and looked down at her with so lowering a brow that for a moment she wondered what fault she had unwittingly committed. But, when he spoke, she saw that his thoughts were far away from her.

"'Put not thy faith in princes,'" he quoted sardonically. "'T is a true saying; but I know another saw that I have this day proved false. 'Blood is

thicker than water.' Thou hast heard it, child?"

"Aye, father, many times," she answered, all trembling.

"It is a lie!" he burst out.

"Was your mission fruitless?" Barbara asked timidly.

"He hath sent no instructions to his agents," John Gorges told her bitterly. "I despatched a message long since, telling Fernando that our last stop would be here and begging him to forward the money I left in his keeping. It seems he is not so rich that he hath failed to covet my small patrimony."

"But is there naught you can do, father?"

"Nay, an we go upon this voyage we leave our all behind us," he answered. "My daughter, should aught befall me, thou must trust to the aid of our brethren in the faith and to the mercy of God, for I do solemnly warn thee that thy kinsfolk thou canst not trust!"

"What mean you, father?" Barbara asked, frightened at the strangeness of his manner."

"I mean that I have been robbed by our nearest kin," he answered angrily. "Mayhap it is a lesson sent that I may learn to content myself with such treasures as we lay up for ourselves in Heaven."

He turned on his heel and left her under the spell of his bitterness, and all the while they lay at anchor John Gorges stayed apart, gazing upon the land with eyes filled with hatred. Alone he brooded upon his wrongs, scarce speaking to his fellows upon the ship,

silent, morose, with but scant courtesy and scanter speech for those who now came eagerly for advice.

It was with a sigh of relief that Barbara bade good-by to Southampton. She was not so good a sailor that she yearned for the open sea, yet she felt that so long as they remained under the shadow of that town her father could not shake off the wrathful thoughts occasioned by the injury he had suffered, and she feared for his reason.

The *Mayflower* and her consort, passing Spithead and the Solent with favoring winds, drew away from the land. A week's time had been lost unnecessarily, they had been forced to sell butter and provisions because of bickerings that had moved one of the underwriters of their enterprise to withhold promised supplies; but the long voyage was at last accounted as really begun.

Already, as she was young and in good health, Barbara found herself growing accustomed to the motion of the *Speedwell*. Seasickness no longer troubled her and, being of a kindly spirit, she set about to aid those who were still laid low by looking after their children, helping in the preparation of their meals and doing any small tasks that came to her hand. She was happy in her usefulness, and told herself that, after all, life among such friendly neighbors would be better than exile with the Dutch, whose very language her father had never encouraged her to learn.

Indeed the English Puritans, although bent upon breaking away from the Established Church, kept to

themselves nor ever wished to be other than English. During their whole residence in the Low Countries they had been intent upon preserving their place as a separate people and well deserved the name " Separatists," which was often applied to their congregations. At Leyden they had mingled as little as possible with the town-folk. Being tillers of the soil they were not at home with the busy Hollanders, whose chief interest lay in trading and manufacture, so this Promised Land in the new country across the deep drew them like a magnet, and they looked forward eagerly to the broad acres that would one day be theirs to till.

A day or two of this happy life passed quickly enough. The sea had roughened, but Barbara found the brisk winds pleasant. They served to blow away the odors of cooking and of overcrowded humanity, and, far from overcoming her patients, seemed to hearten them to make the effort necessary to mount the short ladders to the deck, where their recovery was sure to be hastened.

Since leaving Southampton her father had scarcely opened his lips to speak. He still seemed plunged in the deepest gloom and when she had ventured to ask if he were ill, he had shaken his head in the negative at the same time making a fretful gesture as if to brush away a worrisome fly. Seeing his preoccupation, she had contented herself with looking after his creature comforts as far as lay in her power, feeling herself shut out from his confidence.

Now, however, the voyage met with an unlooked-for setback.

The *Speedwell* sprung aleak, and Master Reinolds, the captain of the craft, assembled the leaders of the Pilgrims to consider what was best to be done. At their suggestion, the *Mayflower* was signaled, and Master Jonas, her captain, was called into consultation.

"'T is my advice that we put into Dartmouth," he told them after a lengthy discussion.

"I know not of my own knowledge, what the condition of this vessel is," John Gorges admitted, "but I protest that if we put back now it will be to our great charge and loss of time and a fair wind."

"And to the saving of the lives of those aboard," Master Jonas retorted. "You say truly, Master Gorges, that you know naught of the condition of this vessel; but I tell you it needs to be thoroughly searched and mended from stem to stern."

This, in spite of the opposition of John Gorges, was the prevailing opinion, and accordingly the *Speedwell* and the *Mayflower* made for Dartmouth, which they reached in safety. Here time was given for a thorough overhauling of the smaller craft, and then they once more put to sea.

They had passed Lands End by about one hundred leagues when Barbara became aware of a vague uneasiness pervading the little vessel. The happy consciousness among the company that they were safely started on a fortunate voyage had given place to unrest and

anxiety. The men clustered together, whispering and casting apprehensive glances at their women and children, as if some secret news had made them fearful. The sailors grew morose and muttered among themselves, shaking their heads ominously; while the captain, with a troubled air, spoke shortly to any who addressed him. The long-boat became a center of interest, and Barbara saw one man furtively stow away a package in it, while another, who had observed the action, nodded approval. What it was all about the girl could not fathom; but as she was leaning on the rail with her eyes on certain water-fowl that followed the *Speedwell,* Master Reinolds stopped near her with two of the older Puritans. They had been conversing earnestly and continued their low-toned controversy as they halted beside her.

"Can you not see that she sits lower in the water than she did?" the captain demanded impatiently. "I am an old sea-dog and have no fears for myself; but, for the sake of those who are dear to you, I cannot find it in my heart to run senseless risks. Give a thought to those Mother Cary's chickens that follow us," he indicated the flying birds, "they do not mean good weather."

"Are we not commanded to draw not back our hands from the plow?" one of the Pilgrims said gravely.

"A plow is one thing and the *Speedwell* is another. A plow cannot open at every seam, till it's no better

than a bundle of loose sticks, and dump your families on the bottom of the ocean," the captain growled with scant respect. "I tell you, good sirs, to go on is folly! I, and the sailors under me, will have no hand in the matter."

Barbara waited to hear no more. Her father, by reason of his years and experience, could speak with authority in this company which had largely been recruited from those whose chief recommendation was their youth and health and strength. It was her duty to warn him what was toward, and she hastened to his side. He sat as usual in the cabin, plunged in gloom, and she hesitated before she plucked up courage to approach him. On deck it had seemed a simple matter to tell him all. Now she found it hard to begin, and moreover she was in such terror over the danger the captain hinted at that it was impossible for her to control her voice.

"Father," she began, in low and trembling tones.

"Presently! Presently!" John Gorges interrupted testily, "I have no wish to eat now."

"I came not to call you to dinner," she protested, "but to advise you that the master vows that the ship is in some danger."

"Tut! Tut!" said her father impatiently, "I hoped that thou wert getting the better of thy senseless fears."

"In truth father I am affrighted at the thought of being plunged in the deep," Barbara acknowledged, "but I heard the master say that he and his sailors

would have no hand in going on. Surely he knows that we cannot work the ship without them, so I am convinced that they mean to put back."

"Now *that* I shall not endure," John Gorges cried, springing to his feet. "Am I never to be quit of England? I no sooner learn to accept with meekness the cross that has been laid upon me than I am taken back to have the memories of my injury revived. I do not intend that we shall return to Dartmouth!"

With steady steps, despite the tossing of the boat, he walked to the companion-ladder and mounted it.

On deck one glance about showed him where the consultants stood, and at once he pushed his way into the group.

"What's this talk I hear of putting back?" he asked, going straightway to the point.

The captain turned to him, hoping to find him a more practical man and less of a fanatic than the others.

"A contract is a contract, good Master Gorges," he said, smoothly, "but a poor mariner is no stronger than his ship. I cannot carry you to the new world on my own back."

"And what pray, is wrong with the *Speedwell?* She was guaranteed stout and seaworthy ere we hired you for this voyage, and since then we have effected every repair you could suggest," Gorges reminded him.

"And so she is seaworthy," the master averred. "We have met with a mishap that none could have counted on. In the great seas last night one took us unawares so that my good pinnace was wracked and

twisted, opening a seam. Thus we sprung aleak, and now, to add to our embarrassment, one pump is choked and will not do its duty, so that the water gaineth upon us."

"I will not countenance a return to Dartmouth," cried John Gorges violently.

"Who talks of Dartmouth, my good sir?" the captain said, as if surprised. "Indeed that would be unreasonable, to demand that we lose the time required to return there. No, no! My plan calls for but a short delay. There is as fine a port as Dartmouth, far handier. We 're just off Plymouth. We will run in there, have our seams caulked, our pumps looked to and put to sea again ere you can say 'scat.'"

"Plymouth!" John Gorges spoke eagerly, and there was a new light in his eyes. "Is not my kinsman, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, governor of that fortified port?"

"Is Sir Ferdinando Gorges your kinsman, sir?" Master Reinolds asked, capping to John Gorges with a new respect. "Indeed he is governor there, and in residence the greater part of the year. If we call in there you will be able to pay your respects to his Excellency."

"'T is in my mind to do that very thing," John Gorges said a trifle grimly, then, turning to his fellows of the Separatist congregation, he went on. "To me it seems new evidence of that Providence that hath us ever in its care, that this mischance should have come upon us when we are within such easy reach of help.

We should give thanks unto the Lord that we were not so bestead in the middle of the vast and tossing ocean."

"Aye," returned one of the company's agents, "there is that side to it, but think of the time lost. Our victuals will be half eaten before we leave the coast of England, and we had hoped to be under roof ere winter."

"And so we will," another man cried heartily. "What mattereth a day or two in such a voyage as ours?"

"Better lose days than lives," the first speaker conceded.

"Well, well, we 're agreed then," the master said hurriedly. He was no Puritan and had been listening with scant patience to their exposition. "By your leave I will go and signal the *Mayflower*. She must be told that we are forced back, for she will scarce wish to go on without our company."

The captain hastened off and the rest of the company dispersed.

John Gorges on his way to the companion, stopped and laid a hand almost caressingly on Barbara's shoulder.

"'T was fine news thou broughtest, little daughter," he said, with unwonted gentleness, and the girl looked up at him with trustful eyes.

"I feared it would not be to your taste," she returned quietly.

"'T is an occasion that passeth my fondest hopes," her father declared, with bitter emphasis. "It will

enable me to see the head of my house, who hath been raised to honor in the land."

He went below, and as Barbara watched him go a different expression crept into her eyes. Had her father not told her, that day in Southampton, to put no trust in any of her kinsmen? But she dismissed this thought. The Governor of such a great port must be an honorable man.

CHAPTER III

JOHN GORGES IS HONORED BY HIS GREAT RELATIVE

THE *Speedwell* rode safely at anchor in the Catwater off Plymouth when Barbara awoke two days later. Her father was in great haste to go ashore, so breakfast was a more than usually hurried meal and the girl spent the day on deck, amusing herself with the varied sights of a crowded roadstead.

That afternoon her father returned in none too good a humor. He had been unsuccessful in his attempts to see Sir Ferdinando, and his temper suffered accordingly; but, toward dusk, an elegantly appointed barge put out from a landing-place at one of the government wharves and made straight for the little *Speedwell*. Her coming caused something of a flutter among those aboard the pinnace. There was time to wonder to whom she belonged and what her errand, ere she drew up to the ladder at the ship's side. The master himself, keenly alive to the honor to his vessel, ran to the ladder-head to meet the supercilous lackey who was the barge's sole passenger.

"I am the bearer of a note from my master, his Excellency, Governor Sir Ferdinando Gorges, to his kinsman, John Gorges, Esquire, out of Coniston in Lancashire," the footman said disdainfully, looking down his nose with scorn at the tubby boat on which he found himself.

John Gorges, hastily summoned to receive the high honor tendered him, seemed hardly so appreciative of it as might have been expected.

He broke the massive seals on the missive and read the document through; then crushed it in his hand and flung it overboard indifferently.

"Tell my cousin, the great Governor," he said, "that I reciprocate his tender messages; but I am over-tired to wait upon him tonight. I shall give myself that pleasure in the morning. Make that plain to him."

With these words, and tossing the footman a coin which he did not disdain, John Gorges turned on his heel and went below once more.

The lackey returned to the barge and moved slowly away.

"'T was the barge of the Governor himself," was murmured about the deck, and that night Barbara had cause to add to her prayers a plea that she might be cured of pride and vain glory, for she found that she was far from displeased by the new respect shown to her as the relative of so exalted a personage.

The answer to this prayer came sooner than she expected, for in the morning, when her father had made ready for his call upon the Governor, finding him in a high good humor, she plucked up courage to ask him why he had not gone the night before as he had been invited.

John Gorges turned toward her with a scowl upon his face.

"I wish the light of day to shine upon this meeting,"

he said sharply. "I wish as many witnesses to it as possible, for I mean to beard the rascal, were it in the face of King James himself and all his Court."

"The rascal?" Barbara repeated, taken aback.

"Aye, the rascal!" declared her father through clenched teeth. "I mean to see if he will dare to tell me face to face what his hired villeins said for him in Southampton. He is no better than a thief, that I know; but for very shame he will scarce wish so to write himself down in my presence. I hope for much pleasure from this merry meeting."

He turned to go and Barbara shrank back, shaken by his sardonic humor and disgusted with herself for her late pride.

"I held myself grander than the others because of my kinship to a thief," she thought, lashing herself with her own scorn. "Truly this should be a lesson to me. Never again will I be led to boast of my great relations."

Had she but known it, however, it was this very kinship that brought her an invitation from a pretty little woman named Brasher to accompany her and her husband for some shopping and sight-seeing in Plymouth. Dame Brasher was by no means averse to being observed in the company of the great Governor's cousin. Her husband had engaged a waterman to row them in from the ship. It would cost nothing more to take Barbara, who would be a companion for her while James went about the business of purchasing a new musket which he had decided he lacked; so the invita-

tion was given and, after some pressing, Barbara accepted it. She did not think her father could object and, girl-like, she longed for the adventure of setting foot in a strange town.

At first this turned out to be commonplace enough. Master Brasher soon left the females to their own devices and Barbara accompanied the giggling young matron from shop to shop, pricing much but buying little. Mistress Brasher was not one of the Puritan faith, and set no limit on her finery; but, her purse being light, it was soon flat, and after reluctantly laying down a fine red feather and going out of the shop without buying anything, even though the shop-keeper had met her price, she acknowledged to Barbara that she had no money left.

"Who would have thought he would have let it go so cheap!" she exclaimed disgustedly, "and me without as much as a groat in my pocket."

"But why go a-bargaining then?" Barbara asked astounded, "if you have not the wherewithal to buy?"

The little woman shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly.

"'T was a passion with me," she acknowledged, "and no matter what I buy, nor what its price, I can always sell again for more than I gave. Had I had the money to take that feather I make no doubt I would have put it off on you for double ere ever we reached back to the *Speedwell.*"

"'T is well you did n't buy with that in mind," Barbara laughed, "for the elders of our congregation

would scarce give me leave to sit among them tricked out in a grand red feather, even had I a taste that way."

They walked on for some time in silence, stopping once and again at tempting displays of gewgaws of various kinds.

"Here, then, is a real bargain to be had!" Dame Brasher exclaimed, standing before a huckster's booth displaying shoe-buckles marked "Siluer true metale." "Can you not lend me the money, my dear? I promise my husband will repay you when we meet him. I know someone who is in need of just such a set of buckles as these." Glancing sidewise at the girl's stout leathern shoes and steel buckles, but without waiting for her to reply the woman began chaffering, and at last, hitting upon a price that suited both her and the shopman, she held out her hand to Barbara for the money; but the girl shook her head laughingly.

"I would I could help you," she said, "but I have not so much by me by nigh a guilder."

"Well, well! That 's too bad!" the woman exclaimed, equably, "let 's see into your purse. Mayhap the coins will foot up to more than you count on."

She took the pouch from Barbara's unresisting hand and counted out the money on the stall.

"'T is too true," she said at last, shaking her head. "Alas, I wanted those buckles sorely." She was preparing to sweep all back into the purse as she spoke.

"Come again tomorrow," said the huckster cunningly. "Perchance you 'll have a heavier bag by then."

"No chance of a return for us," Dame Brasher sighed. "We 're from the pinnace *Speedwell* in the harbor. Our repairs, we are told, will be made today. Tomorrow, when the tide serves, we sail again for the plantations."

"Take the buckles," said the man, vanquished, covering the little pile of coins with a great hairy hand.

The good wife clapped the ornaments up without a word and slipped them into her purse, where they made as brave a jingling as if they had been fashioned from pure gold.

"Always display your money. The true shopkeeper cannot bear to let it slip when once his eye hath feasted on it," the dame explained, excitedly, as they walked away. "But yours, indeed, was a wise thought. Never would I have expected it of you, to plot to get me the buckles at scarce half price."

"But I planned naught," said Barbara, shaking an empty purse. "I told the truth, no less. That was all the money I had by me. 'T was the last of my housekeeping money out of Leyden."

"It matters not. I got them at a bargain and mayhap, as they were so cheap, my goodman will let me keep the buckles for my own enjoyment," the woman prattled on.

As she spoke they came out into a wide, cobbled square which, except for its dirt, was not unlike some of the sunny squares Barbara knew so well in Holland. Streets opened into it from all sides, and suddenly from one of these a press of men came tumbling. Seem-

ingly they were cutting and stabbing at each other indiscriminately, and, well-nigh paralyzed with terror, the girl would have stopped in their very path, had not Mistress Brasher seized her arm and hurried her into the protection of an arched doorway.

"'T is a garrison town," she said breathlessly, "tremble not so. Such men have more than the nine lives of a cat. They exist between brawls only in the hope of the next. 'T is a garrison town," she repeated, "but where is the watch or the guard?" And the lively little woman let up a shout. "Ho, the watch! The watch!"

At this cry the majority of the men took to their heels in alarm, leaving a silent figure stretched upon the pebble-stones. Over this man one other bent and slipped a hand within the breast of his jerkin as if to feel his heart or to relieve him of a treasure.

With a low cry of horror Barbara threw off Dame Brasher's restraint and ran to place her frail body between the fallen man and the bravo who threatened him; for the girl had recognized both her father and his assailant.

CHAPTER IV

SIR FERDINANDO SENDETH A LAST MESSAGE

BARBARA'S advent apparently frightened off the last cut-throat, for he made off at top speed, sheathing his sword as he went, and with a moan of despair, the girl knelt beside the prostrate figure.

"Father! Father! Are you much hurt?" she questioned, in an agony of suspense, but John Gorges could not answer. Save for his labored breathing he might have been thought dead.

But, now that all danger was past, a goodly crowd of the curious quickly collected and among these Mistress Brasher, recovered at length from her amazement and fright, made her way through the press to the girl's side by a vigorous use of her elbows.

"Heaven send he is not killed, my child," she cried, stooping down to Barbara who lifted her father's head from the rough paving.

"He still breathes," the girl murmured, white to the lips. "We must carry him to the ship."

"'T is a surgeon he needs most, missy," a rough but kindly man said, bending over the stricken figure.

"He 's ne'er dead, your Da," murmured another encouragingly.

"'T were best to carry him to an inn," the first man suggested. "There 's the Wooden Sailor near the

water-front. 'T is a clean place, and honester than most."

"Aye, that 's best," another put in. "After he 's patched up a bit, 't will be time enough to talk of taking him to a ship. Come, lads, give us a hand," he went on, and the crowd jostled each other in their eagerness to help in any way they could.

A shutter of green painted wood was unhooked and John Gorges was laid upon it. The man looked strangely shrunken and colorless against the bright panels as he was borne along by friendly hands, who carried the stretcher gently down the cobbled street to the inn.

Here Mistress Brasher came forward with a very wise piece of advice.

"On the *Mayflower* is Master Fuller. The best surgeon we could get for a case like this, my dear," she said. "The fact that he was put in charge of the general health of the expedition did much to incline my husband toward it. I beg you let me send for him."

Barbara nodded assent, welcoming the suggestion, for she knew well Master Fuller and his skill; but she could not speak. She followed the little procession up the stairs of the inn and, after the insensible form had been laid upon a bed in one of the neat rooms, she sat down to wait, not daring to do more than lave her father's brow with water until the doctor should come.

Upon Master Fuller's arrival she was straightway sent from the room, while Mistress Brasher tried to

comfort her as best she might; but the girl, numb with the suddenness and shock of her experience, was still mute and sat staring at the closed door, fearful of the verdict that the surgeon might give her.

At last, after what seemed well-nigh endless watching, she was allowed to return to the sick-room. Her father had been put to bed and, though still unconscious, he seemed more comfortable and his face less white against the pillow.

"My child I have examined thy father and dressed his wounds," said the doctor gently. "He hath been foully dealt with."

"Can we not take him out to the ship?" Barbara murmured, her eyes fixed upon the figure on the bed.

"Nay, at this moment we cannot even think of that," Master Fuller answered. "He must lie quiet, and I have prepared a febrifuge and stimulants for thee to give him when again he regains his wits."

He showed the girl what she must do and, leaving her sitting beside the still figure, he went out into the corridor where Mistress Brasher met him.

"I see you shaking your head, Master Fuller," she said anxiously. "Is Master Gorges so sorely hurt?"

"I know not aught more that I can do," the doctor told her. "'T is now the situation of the maid that weighs upon my mind. Her father is past human help, and she is motherless."

"You mean that Master Gorges cannot sail with us to the plantations?" Dame Brasher asked. "I pray you say not so, dear doctor,"

"I mean that he is bound upon his last long journey. How many days or hours he will endure no one can tell, for he was a very lusty man; but we hope our ships will be ready to sail at dawn, no special leak having been found in the *Speedwell,* and Master Gorges must be left behind."

"The girl will never go without him," cried the little woman. "Indeed it would be scarce human to bid her leave her father on his dying bed."

Master Fuller looked grave, but he persisted in his argument.

"'T is a hard case, but that is exactly what I mean," he acknowledged. "I must consider the living rather than the dying. This poor child cannot be left alone here in what is, to her, naught better than a strange land."

"Good master," said Mistress Brasher, after an instant's thought, "there is one circumstance I see that hath a hope in it. This girl, alone, is scarce fit to cope with the wilderness, as you will allow. Now as it happens she hath kinsmen in high places. The very Governor of this town, the great Sir Ferdinando Gorges, is a relative, who yesterday sent his own barge to wait upon her father and do him honor."

"Now that is right good news you tell me," said Doctor Fuller, rubbing his hands together. "The similarity of the names never struck me before. Do you go out to the *Speedwell* and collect Barbara's gear and her father's, sending all in by a trusty messenger. I will make myself chargeable for this expense —"

"No need," interrupted Dame Brasher. "I owe the young miss a trifle that will cover that."

"Good, then," said the kindly doctor. "We will have her things brought here and thus spare her the sudden shock of hearing that her father is too ill to go. I will take it upon myself to apprise the honorable Governor of her father's ill-hap in his town and of his young cousin's desolate condition, and I doubt not that ere we are out of sight of land she will be surrounded by all that a loving kinsman can do to lighten her load of sorrow. She is young, pretty, appealing. She will soon make a place for herself in the hearts of her kinsfolk and will be much better off than she would be facing unknown dangers without her father at her side to protect her. For my part," the good man ended, "I have been against the inclusion of women-folk in this first expedition from the beginning. My own wife I am leaving behind. I hold it will be time enough to bring females out when there are roofs ready to cover their heads."

"I wish all men thought like you," Dame Brasher said. "Being London-bred with five children to do for, I 've no liking to go out of hearing of Bow Bells. Sure am I that a comely maid such as this will indeed be better off on this side of the deep."

Thus, without her consent, Barbara's fate was sealed; yet, had her advice been asked, she would not have decided differently. Nothing would have dragged her from her father's side.

At one point, however, Doctor Fuller's plans went

astray. With great pains, and an oft-sharpened quill, the worthy man indited a moving letter addressed to "The Honorable, The Governor of Plimoth." He engaged a waterman, at some expense to his slender purse, to deliver it; but this varlet, knowing that the *Mayflower* was for the plantations and never expecting to see the writer again, once he was safely out of Master Fuller's sight, looked the letter over back and front, for he could not read, then with great care tore it into tiny fragments and cast it upon the moving tide, spitting after it for luck.

"That saveth a worthy man from a kicking from Sir Ferdy's 'aughty lackeys," he said, rubbing himself reflectively.

Thus it came about that Barbara was left alone in her sore need.

All through the night and well into the next day Barbara watched beside her father, waiting through the long, anxious hours for him to open his eyes; but he continued unconscious. She hoped that Master Fuller would return, but realized how slight a hope it was. The *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell* must have sailed without her. She had no doubt that this was the explanation of the worthy doctor's absence from his patient.

So far as the voyage to America was concerned, she considered it not at all. It was evident, even to her inexperienced eyes, that her father could not be moved on shipboard, and far less could he endure the tossing of a vessel in quick seas. Nor could the Pilgrims wait

upon his recovery, which at best she saw must be slow.

So much she did not question, but as the minutes sped on and the wounded man showed no sign of regaining his senses, she began to ask herself whether indeed he would recover at all.

The doctor had said naught of that. He had contented himself with assuring her that all had been done that human skill could suggest. He had spoken approvingly of her capacity as a nurse and of her courage (she who knew herself as timid as a mouse, courageous!) but never a word had he said as to the term of the illness or the likelihood of recovery.

And while she pondered over this, she withdrew her gaze from her father for a moment. When she looked again his eyes were open and regarding her steadily.

"I thirst," he whispered feebly.

Instinctively her hand reached out for the stimulant Master Fuller had left ready and she held it to his lips.

"A sup of this will hearten you," she said eagerly.

Her father tried to gulp a great mouthful, as was his habit, and well-nigh strangled himself.

"Be not so hasty," said Barbara chidingly, "let it trickle down your throat, drop by drop, till it strengthens you."

Guided by his daughter, Gorges managed to swallow a little of the potent liquor, and when he spoke again his voice was stronger.

"Thou art to go at once on board the *Speedwell,*" were his words.

Barbara looked at him in astonishment, then she essayed to change the subject.

"I will tuck you in and, if you doze a little, you will be stronger when next you wake," she said, smoothing the coverlet.

But John Gorges brushed aside her subterfuge impatiently.

"I have not so much strength that thou shouldst make me give commands twice over," he cried, much in in his wonted manner. "I know that I cannot sail with the ship; but 't is my will that thou dost. My life here is not worth a penny's purchase." He stopped, panting, and reached his hand for more of the elixir, which Barbara hastened to hold to his lips.

"Indeed, dear father," she said gently, "I beg that you do not bid me leave you. Away from you, my existence would be far from sweet to me. In truth, were you not ill, you would be the first to see that I am of such small importance that none would trouble to harm me, here nor anywhere."

"I am not ill," George replied, "my mind is as clear as ever it was. I am wounded to the death by hired assassins. That is all."

Barbara concealed a start. Then she spoke soothingly.

"Sleep now. There will be plenty of time to talk of this later," she said. She did not want to tell him that the *Speedwell* must have sailed and that she was alone with him in this unfriendly town, fearing the

effect the rigors might have upon him in his weakened state.

"There is no time to spare," he fretted. "Pack up your feminine gewgaws and get hence. We are certain to have been traced to this spot."

To quiet him Barbara gathered up her few belongings to take them to her chamber which lay across a narrow hall, her father following her with his eyes and muttering feverishly the while.

"Thou shouldst be safe beyond the ocean. Although that man's overweening covetousness reacheth out to grasp vast possessions on that continent, thou goest to Virginia where he hath no power. Also I bid thee commend thyself to Captain Standish. He, too, is from Lancashire and a dauntless man. Tell him thy tale and he will protect thee."

For a moment his mind seemed to wander, but Barbara, startled by this mention of Myles Standish, asked, naturally enough,

"What tale am I to tell Captain Standish?"

This brought Master Gorges back to himself and he rapped out with something of his old vigor:

"The tale of how I was tricked!"

"Tricked!" echoed Barbara. "Sure, 't was not —"

"Aye, tricked, and by my own cousin, the great Governor," her father broke in. "Sir Ferdinando met me with soft words, professed his great pleasure at seeing his dear kinsman and disclaimed the action of his agents at Southampton."

"And gave thee thy patrimony?" Barbara asked eagerly.

"Every stiver of it," her father answered. "He counted the gold into my hand with interest, and, at the end, wished me well upon my voyage. The hardy villain!"

"But if he gave thee back thy money—" Barbara began. Once more the wounded man broke in upon her speech.

"Aye, but only to have his hired bravos set on me to steal all that for which he had received my thanks and every groat I had by me as well." Exhausted, he lay panting for breath and Barbara hastened to give him another sip of the reviving potion.

"Now rest awhile," she said.

He nodded, whispering: "That is the tale. Now make all ready for thy departure, then come to bid me good-by. Thou art a good child, Barbara, and I have loved thee better than thou knewest."

Greatly moved Barbara leaned down and kissed his brow, a caress she had scarce ventured on in her life before; then crossing to her own chamber, she busied herself setting it to rights, pondering deeply upon all the problems her father's recital had unfolded for her consideration.

That he was just in his surmise that it was Sir Ferdinando who had caused him to be waylaid she never doubted; his words had brought back to her the recollection that she had recognized the rascal who had stooped to make sure they had all the valuables her

father carried, as the varlet who, tricked out in gay livery, had come off to the *Speedwell* in the Governor's luxurious barge. To be sure he looked vastly different in corslet and armor, but it was the same man, of that she was certain.

And was it not a low and crafty scheme to pay in full only to take back the gold and hold it without any claim upon it? This thought brought her face to face with an immediate problem. With their money gone how was she to pay the bills that accumulate so fast in any sickness?

She sank into a chair to puzzle the matter out, having decided to leave her father to himself for a little in the hope that he would fall asleep or else, in his weakness, forget his command that she should embark on the *Speedwell;* so she sat quietly with folded hands, turning over and over in her mind what it was best she should do.

Her father's recovery of consciousness had made her very hopeful, notwithstanding his statement that he had been done to death. He had talked almost like his old self and, if he regained his strength, she had no doubt of his being able in some way to meet all their obligations promptly. Therefore it was probably foolish of her to sit and worry over responsibilities that would soon be lifted from her shoulders.

This was her conclusion and she sprang to her feet and moved lightly about the room determined to be brave and to put her perplexities aside; but her mind continued to dwell upon them despite this resolution.

"If only Dame Brasher had not borrowed from her to buy those buckles she would have had a little in hand," her thoughts ran on, and she recalled with faint amusement that goodwife's flattering estimate of herself as a profit-taker.

Suddenly disturbed by a noise in the hall she ran to her door and looked out, intending to beg anyone who passed that way to be as quiet as possible in order to allow her father to sleep. But the men she had heard were disappearing down the stair, and she closed her door again.

They were lucky in their inn, she thought. It was proving a very quiet place and its mistress, who had waited on her now and then, was most obsequious. In truth the selection of the chambers for her father and herself had been most fortunate. They were at the quiet end of the house, away from the pot-room and common-room. Her windows afforded a glimpse of the water-front; but her father's overlooked a weedy garden belonging to a small house that faced on another street, whose only inhabitants were a slim yellow cat on the search for food, and the birds who hopped, regardless of that menace, on the branches of a gnarled pear tree.

In truth she knew not how they could have been better placed.

She had no measure of the passage of time and began to feel an uneasiness at being so long away from her father's room. Also there was danger of her dozing if she sat still, for she had had no sound sleep

since he had been attacked. She longed to go back to him, but dreaded lest she should be ordered to join the ship the moment he clapped eyes upon her.

So thinking she hesitated on her threshold, then crossed the hall softly and opened his door with the extremest care.

Her father looked up and smiled triumphantly at her.

"I have waited but for thee. Take a father's blessing. Thou art safe!"

"Think not of me," Barbara replied, bending over him. "Let me give thee another portion of the good doctor's medicine, then mayhap thou wilt be able to sleep."

"Nay, I shall sleep without the aid of any potion," he whispered. "The most noble Governor hath sent again to make sure I shall trouble him no more."

"You mean his minions have been here?" cried Barbara, horrified.

"Aye," her father answered, growing weaker each moment. "They came, looking for thee as well, and thinking to make an end of any of my blood who might bring a claim against Ferdinando; but I let them think that thou hadst sailed upon the *Speedwell,* all unknowing. List, child, tell not thy name to any in Plymouth for, an it cometh to the ears of the Governor, he will not spare thee any more than he hath spared thy father." He panted for his last remaining breaths, looking up at the girl bending over him.

"Weep not for me, my child," he faltered. "Hire-

ling assassins have given me the coup de grâce; yet for that Sir Ferdinando Gorges hath my thanks, in that he hath spared me some days of suffering, for I could in no wise have recovered. So now, my daughter, I go. With my latest breath I pray God to bless and keep thee."

His eyes closed wearily and Barbara, fainting, fell across the foot of the bed.

CHAPTER V

DAME DANCE FINDETH A NEW MAID

MERCIFULLY Barbara was spared the events of the next day. She lay in her chamber in a sort of daze, aware of but one thing; her father needed her ministrations no more. The innkeeper and his wife had taken charge of the burial, it being quite evident that Barbara was in no state to issue orders; and when she came fully to a realization of conditions it was to know herself absolutely alone in the world.

Her father's gear had been collected and piled in one corner of her chamber and she was regarding it with a sorrowful smile, wondering what a maid could do with firelocks and armor, when a knock at the door apprised her of a visitor.

"I pray you enter," she called listlessly, knowing that it must be the innkeeper's fat wife.

The woman came in pleasantly enough. She was a neat and cleanly person who always reminded Barbara of the Dutch vrouws of Holland. Her red cheeks were polished with soap till they shone and her sandy locks were plastered tightly back, with no hair out of place; but she had a cold, blue eye and a shrewish mouth, and those who frequented the inn had no doubt as to who was master in it.

"And how is the little lady today?" she asked pleasantly enough, though her eyes were watchful and her smile a trifle set.

"I am better, thank you, so much better that I shall soon begin to feel myself a lazy drone to be sitting here with no work between my fingers."

Dame Dance nodded approval.

"You 've been well brought up for a young miss," she said. "And now what are your plans? I cannot think you will stop in Plymouth forever."

Barbara hesitated. Was there ever so lonely a girl in the whole world?

"I have not yet had time to make up my mind what I had best do," she confessed softly.

"I 've no wish to bustle you." The innkeeper's wife spoke more truculently now. "But it is right to remind you that your charges are mounting daily. We have yet to see the color of your money, young lady."

"That I know," said Barbara, bursting into tears. "I think of naught else but of how I may repay you. Yet, for all my thinking, I have come to no solution of the difficulty, seeing that I am without a penny in my pouch."

"You mean you have no money?" cried the woman, red with indignation and ruffling like a turkey cock. "You 've lived here like a princess on the fat of the land, while I waited on you hand and foot, and you have not the wherewithal to pay me my just charges? Now out upon you for a thieving baggage!"

As she spoke her eyes roved around the room on the

search for valuables, and in truth she was content with what she saw; for John Gorges' arms and armor were of a worth to satisfy several such accounts as hers.

"If you will but lend me the money to pay my way back to Leyden, Master Robinson, the minister of our congregation, will help me to refund the sum to you," Barbara sobbed.

Dame Dance raised her hands appealingly.

"Was there ever such a zany?" she remarked contemptuously. "Dost think my good man and I are made of gold? First we are to keep you in luxury without recompense. Next we are to pay to send you out of the country, so that you may be quite safe from any claims we may have upon your purse. You must take us for lackwits indeed!"

She rose to go, but paused on the threshold to say threateningly:

"I shall advise with the landlord about your case. Think not to escape till you have paid a just penalty for your deceitfulness."

Left alone Barbara abandoned herself to wild weeping, while down stairs the innkeeper and his wife talked the situation over from every side.

"'T is as I warned you since ever they were brought in here! No luck comes of such-like cases. They only serve to give the inn a bad name."

"You mean she cannot pay?" The innkeeper, a round little man who reminded everyone who saw him of a white rabbit, twitched his nose nervously as he spoke. Well he knew that anything that went wrong

at the Wooden Sailor would be blamed upon his mismanagement.

"The wench hath not a stiver," Dame Dance went on, working herself up into a rage, for her cupidity had grown the more she realized Barbara's supineness, and now it was necessary to browbeat her husband to her way of thinking.

"But her father was plainly a man of substance," the white rabbit ventured timidly. "The people who waited upon them from the ships were solid folk. You said as much yourself."

"Aye, but I told you to question them closely as to many things and you never opened your mouth save to say 'Very good, sir!' 'Thank you, sir!'" Dame Dance imitated his deprecatory manner scornfully. "So we know naught. Not so much as their names — and we 're out of pocket, Dance, forget not that."

"Have you not a tongue of your own? In truth I 've never missed it since the day I married you. Why then did you say naught?" Dance suggested feebly.

"I am but a weak woman," the goodwife smoothed her apron. "'T is my place but to give advice,— which, alas, is never followed." She wiped an imaginary tear from her eye, keeping a watch on Dance the while.

"How can you say that I never take your advice?" the innkeeper asked. "Well you know that I have great faith in your judgment."

"You cannot claim that you have taken it in this

case," his wife insisted, "and Tommy needing shirts and Prosperity shoes, and the whole inn falling to pieces about our ears for lack of a sup of paint to hold it together."

"What is it you would have me do, woman?" Dance's nose was twitching violently now.

"Naught that you would not approve," Dame Dance said meekly. "In fact I see that I had best not mix nor meddle in the matter. You know as much as I. You know that whatever gold the man had he was relieved of, for we found his purse-strings cut and his purse missing when we moved his belongings across the corridor."

"Aye. I know all that, but how was I to guess the maid had no money? For all I could tell she might have hid her purse for safety."

"'T was likely, was it not, after the last visit of those vagabonds, that they would have left aught behind that was worth the taking?" Dame Dance's tone was one of contempt.

"At least you will own that you counciled hastening the burial and saying naught to the authorities," her husband urged.

"That I did," snapped Dame Dance. "And 't is the one glimmer of sound sense shown in this mad affair. Would you have the name of the inn ruined by this tale of murder in broad daylight? Would you like to be haled before a magistrate to prove that you had no hand in it? Would anyone believe the truth — that no one of us all saw the men who did the deed? Odds

bodikins, there was nothing else to do, no matter what it cost!"

"Then blame me not on the score of expense," Dance said.

"I have no thought of blame." Dame Dance changed her tune and spoke as from a breaking heart. "I but regret that, losing sight of your family's necessities, you are so tender of one who hath swindled you that you will not take your just due."

"I tender, I!" Dance stuttered. "Let anyone but show me how I may get my own back and my heart is iron!"

"Then, if in truth you ask my advice, it is this. Go boldly to the girl and demand that she send to her friends for money to pay you in full."

The white rabbit curled up into a little ball.

"My dear," he said feebly, "we must e'en let the matter rest for a few days. The poor young thing needs time to gather her wits."

"No amount of time will gather yours, Dance," his wife declared, pretending to be thoroughly exasperated by what he had said, although in truth she had expected no less. "I see now that, if we are to regain even a part of what we have spent, I must take the matter into my own hands."

"That I think will be much the best thing," her husband interrupted eagerly, his nose fairly winking with nervousness. "But you 'll be gentle with the poor little missy? My heart aches for the child."

Indeed he spoke no more than the truth, for the innkeeper was a kindly man.

"I 'll do what 's best for her," his wife nodded a trifle grimly. "No one can think she should give herself up to weeping in that chamber of hers. She needs to mix with others, and — and change of scene," she added cunningly.

"But how will that bring us back our money?" Dance asked curiously. He had as yet, no hint of the woman's plan.

"There 's her father's harness, silly! 'T will be a relief to her to be rid of the care of it," said his practical helpmate. "I do not say it will bring us all she owes us; but in my judgment it should. Meanwhile, lest her obligations grow greater, I will set her to doing a little light work to pay for her food and keep."

Her husband regarded her admiringly, wishing he were as quick as she to see his way.

"If we sell the harness to the best advantage it should bring much above the debt," he said. "What 's left will be a welcome nest-egg to the young girl."

"We should have a fine commission on the sale," Dame Dance suggested jealously; but Dance, for once, spoke firmly.

"This is an honest house," he declared. "I mean it to stay so! We 'll take what 's due us and not a stiver more. Remember that, my lass."

This firmness on his part sent Dame Dance back to Barbara in none too good a temper. She opened the

door of the girl's room without the courtesy of knocking and announced her intentions from the threshold.

"I 've talked things over with the landlord," she announced, rather grandly. "He says, if you can't pay at least you can work. In truth it is no kindness to let you sit here and blear your eyes with weeping. So come with me and I will set you tasks that will pay for your keep, at least."

Barbara rose at once, glad of anything to lessen the obligation she was under.

"I 'm well used to work," she said. "I kept the house in Holland and did all that was necessary."

"Good lack! Is that the truth?" Dame Dance looked at her keenly. "And I 've been taking you for a lady all this time. What 's your name?" she asked curiously, for at once she suspected that Barbara was a bond-servant rather than the daughter of the dead man.

"Barbara," began the girl innocently, then remembering her father's injunction not to mention her name, lest a fate like his pursue her, she ended simply, "Barbara, that 's all."

"Come on then, Barbary!" The goodwife, with all her suspicions confirmed, led the way, busily thinking things over from this new point of view. The girl, when not spotted with tears was personable enough. It might be a wise thing to attach her to the Wooden Sailor permanently, so she softened her manner and led Barbara into the tap-room.

This was not the service the girl had expected and it was upon her lips to protest, but she knew that she

owed the woman money and held her tongue, even when a recollection of her father's proud admonition came to her. He had said that she must forever give up talk of going out to service because she was well-born.

"My father's great relative hath left me little cause for pride of family!" she exclaimed inwardly. "And I feel sure my father would not chide me for paying our debts in the only way that is open to me."

As she stood aloof turning this over in her mind, Dame Dance bustled up to her with two mugs of beer.

"These be for the sailors at that table." She pointed with a stubby finger. "Spill them not, nor forget to bring me the money," she ended as she turned away.

Walking carefully Barbara was on her way down the long room when she came to a sudden stop. Surely, surely the man she saw in the far corner was Myles Standish, who had sailed on the *Mayflower?* She looked again, scarce able to believe her eyes and yet unable to doubt them. She recollected his quick gestures, his way of looking from beneath his brows straight at a person as if he could read the mind. If he would only move she could make quite sure — and at that moment he sprang lightly to his feet. It was the very man, there was no doubt of it! He was as quick and graceful as a woman for all his strength, and forgetting the beer she carried, she was setting off in pursuit of him when she was recalled to her surroundings by the bellowing of the two sailors.

"This way! This way!" they shouted. "Zounds, girl, art growing to the floor. 'T is a thirsty voyage we 've made, and our gullets are so dry we can scarce wait to damp them."

Murmuring an excuse under her breath she endeavored to set down the mugs while striving at the same time to keep an eye upon Captain Standish. In so doing she spilt some of the beer, for which she was soundly berated; but so intent was she to hold in view a friendly face that she would have gone away without the reckoning had not one of the men reminded her.

"Thou wilt scarce meet a hearty welcome an thou puttest back without the price," he warned her, good-naturedly enough. "And we want more! Fetch us a jug apiece. A sailor's throat is a long one."

As the seaman spoke she looked directly at him and saw that he was no stranger to her. The man was one of the crew of the *Speedwell,* and Myles Standish's presence seemed explained, for she jumped to the natural conclusion that once again both vessels must have returned.

This discovery had concentrated her attention on the sailors for a moment and for that instant she had lost sight of Captain Standish. When she sought him again he was gone.

CHAPTER VI

THE *SPEEDWELL* ABANDONETH THE ADVENTURE

FOR some time Barbara was kept busy in the taproom of the Wooden Sailor, which was half full of seamen from the various vessels in the harbor. It was a misfortune that Myles Standish had gone without seeing her, for the girl was so shy at the thought of trying to enlist a stranger's interest in her case that she knew that she would never be able to brace herself to the task of seeking him out in cold blood. About the people on the *Speedwell* she felt quite differently. She was strong and hearty. There was no doubt to her mind that she could be a useful member of their community, and she had already been appointed to a place therein. It was her good fortune that had brought the vessel back so that she might claim that place, and she determined to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Accordingly she waited for a time when the business of the inn slackened temporarily, to run up to her chamber, seize a kerchief to throw over her head, slip out of the Wooden Sailor and down to the water-front. Here she walked up and down, hunting for a familiar face, and it was not long before her search was rewarded.

As it drew in to the landing-place she espied a boat

piled high with gear of one kind and another, amid which the round heads of the five Brasher children appeared to be wedged like mushrooms on a hillside.

In a tremble of excitement she ran down the steep steps to the landing-stage to await their coming.

"So splashed are we, we might as well have been towed behind the wherry at the end of a rope," Barbara heard Dame Brasher scold. "In common honesty you should abate somewhat of your price.".

"Not I, then," the waterman responded. "Rather should I have double fare, for you have the boat so overladen 'tis a mercy we were not swamped."

As her husband settled with the man the bustling little woman caught sight of Barbara, and her face melted to a kindlier expression.

"We 're returned like a bad coin," she said, taking the girl in her embrace for a moment. "What 's your news, my dear?" Then, seeing that Barbara's eyes filled with tears, she went on hurriedly. "You need not tell me, my child. I know well that all has come about as good Master Fuller prophesied. My heart is sore for you; but indeed you and your father were spared a great disappointment. The *Speedwell* hath not stirred from her anchorage since last we met and our journey is at an end ere ever it had fairly begun."

"What?" exclaimed Barbara, momentarily forgetting her grief at this astounding news. "You cannot mean that you will not start again?"

"So far as we are concerned," James Brasher put in, "the adventure endeth here. I shall make my re-

port to those interested; but I am in accord with the leaders of the expedition who hold that this voyage is too severe a test for young children, more especially at this late season."

"But the *Speedwell*—." Barbara was interrupted by Dame Brasher.

"She 's a leaky tub!" the woman stated emphatically. "Weak in every way. They wronged us who bade us trust our fortunes to her. We will return to London overland, nor risk our lives in her further."

"But hath she given up the trip?" asked Barbara dismayed.

"They began to transfer passengers and lading to the *Mayflower* yesterday," Brasher replied judicially. "There be those who believe she will go on when lightened, but no such promise is held out to us. For my part I 've had enough of her, and I judge that most of her family have supped their fill of the perils of the sea."

"I 'm ready to go on with her," Barbara said positively.

"There 's talk of weeding out all the women and children," Brasher told her, "but I doubt not it will come to naught. There be those in high places who will not move without their families."

"I call it little better than a swindle," Dame Brasher cried heatedly. "We are coaxed away from our happy homes, we sell all our gear that we cannot carry with us, we buy great muskets and firelocks — much use these would be to us in London —"

"Peace! Peace, Maudlin! Well you know you disposed of my armory at a good profit or ever we left the ship," Brasher interrupted.

"Small thanks to the Worshipful the Company. 'T is me ye have to be grateful to, who can look beyond my nose and see what is ahead. I made my bargain ere ever the others suspected the *Speedwell* would not go on."

"And how about the silver buckles?" asked Barbara with a half-smile.

"I have them still by me, if you desire them," Dame Brasher answered. "As fine buckles as ever you saw, and for friendship's sake, I 'll advance the price but little to you, though well you know they are worth double."

At this Barbara laughed outright.

"Now why do you laugh?" asked the little woman, bristling. But for once Barbara found herself unabashed.

"I laugh because it tickleth my fancy that my money should go to buy the buckles and that I should yet be offered the privilege of paying for them a second time or ever I may wear them," she reminded the dame archly.

"'T is true you paid for them," Mistress Brasher acknowledged.

"And did you not pay back the advance?" asked her husband.

"Nay now, James, be reasonable. We returned to the *Speedwell* or ever I had the opportunity. More-

over, something is due me in my turn for packing her gear and paying the waterman."

"Was it you who sent me our belongings?" cried Barbara, conscience-stricken now lest she had been ungrateful to a benefactress. "Then indeed we must cry quits."

"You hear her, James?" said the little woman complacently.

"Aye, I hear," returned the goodman sourly. "You must return what you borrowed.

"No, no," his wife urged. "Mistress Barbara is not one to be content to pay for service with a hat-full of thanks —."

"How much was it?" her husband interrupted her inexorably. "You may subtract what you gave the waterman, no more." And, without further words, Dame Brasher paid over the exact sum.

So it befell that Barbara returned to the Wooden Sailor feeling like a lady of fortune as compared with her former penniless state.

With her money in her hand she walked directly up to Master Dance and held it out to him.

He looked at it, blinking his eyes a trifle.

"What 's here?" he asked.

"'T is silver," answered Barbara happily. "'T is no great sum, but a friend hath paid a debt that was owed to me, and you have been so kind I want you to take it. I know not how I shall manage it, but I promise that if you will give me time to pay, you shall not be the loser by me or mine."

The pink end of the small man's nose twitched appreciatively.

"I always said you was a little lady," he declared. "Put up the money, my dear. Stow it safe away. 'T is best you should have a little by you.— And tell no one of it but me," he whispered. Then louder. "I have no fear that you will not pay me in good time." Having said which he pressed the coins into her hand and trotted into the common-room.

Barbara watched him go, then ran upstairs the ready tears blinding her eyes. Truly there were many good, kind souls in the world after all.

She opened the door of her room hastily, then drew back in amazement. A lady was within, quite a pretty lady, who was brushing her hair with steady strokes and humming a song to herself the while, evidently very much at home.

"Come in, my dear," she said kindly looking at Barbara. "I crave your indulgence. I did not hear your knock. I vow I must be deafened by the noises of the gale."

"But there is no gale," Barbara was quite puzzled.

The lady laughed. Evidently she was a merry soul.

"Not now, but there was. Oh, such a gale! The great waves slapped the ship till it trembled through and through. The cordage strained and creaked, and the wind roared through the rigging. Now that it is all over me seemeth that the silence is almost oppressive. 'T is strange that I did not hear your knock."

"But I did not knock," Barbara said. The lady

raised her eyebrows a trifle questioningly but went on brushing her hair. "You see," the girl continued, "I did not expect to find anyone within here. When I went forth this was my room."

"Your room!" exclaimed the lady. "You mean the things they moved from here were your belongings? But this is an outrage. I liked not that flat-faced female from the first."

"Indeed she was within her rights," said Barbara, then, her own face flaming red, she went on bravely, "you see, my father was set on and robbed; so that I cannot pay our score. If the landlady can let the chamber at a profit, 'tis but just that she should put me elsewhere; so you must not feel that you have turned me out. I could not expect to keep this room much longer."

"But I do not understand!" The lady knit her brows. "Your father will get more money and then —."

At her words Barbara's tears once more began to fall and in an instant the stranger was by her side and had her arms around her.

"What is it, my sweet?" she crooned as if to a little child. "Someone hath frighted you. I know, for I, too, am easily alarmed."

"'T is not fright," Barbara sobbed, "'t is grief. I think I shall never be afraid again. The worst that could befall hath happened. They killed my father."

For a moment the arms that were around her re-

laxed from horror, then they enfolded her again and she and the stranger mingled their tears.

"What can I say to comfort you?" the young woman sobbed. "That hath befallen you which I stand ever in dread of. My husband is a soldier. I think it is my one prayer that I may be taken before he is, for I lack the courage to face life alone." She wept without restraint for a short time, then suddenly controlling herself, she said: "You must go now. My husband may be here at any moment and, as you see, I am not fully attired; but promise to come again tomorrow."

"I will surely come," Barbara agreed.

"Some time in the forenoon will be best," the lady said, and the two parted like old friends.

Barbara went below stairs to find the mistress of the inn. She wished to know what room had been assigned to her and entered the tap-room, quite unconscious of having committed any grave fault, to be assailed with reproaches that verged upon abuse.

"Do you think to eat the bread of idleness?" Dame Dance demanded. "Is your time your own that you can go forth to take the air like a fine lady, when it pleases you? Am I to work my fingers to the bone to keep you while you stroll in the sunshine for all to see? You, who owe so great a debt? Hereafter, mark me well, my lass, you will earn your dinner ere you eat it. Take these." She pressed into Barbara's hands bread and a pile of pewter plates. "Serve those people, and see that you do it with a right good will."

Barbara's docility and willingness to be of use had fired Dame Dance with the ambition to obtain a cheap serving-maid. She conceived that all she need do to assure this was to keep ever before the girl the extent of her obligation and, if she manifested any spirit, to cow it at once. Thus she would secure a helper at small expense and be in a position to look down upon the mistress of the Tin Soldier, an inn which had ever been a dangerous rival to the Wooden Sailor.

Barbara took the platters and set about the task laid upon her shoulders; but such treatment made her all the more determined to find a way to liquidate her obligations and rejoin the expedition to North Virginia. She worked tirelessly, and, when at last it was time to put out the lights, even the mistress of the inn looked at her approvingly. Surely, if this kept up, the Wooden Sailor had found a paragon. The landlady reminded herself of the saw about a new broom, but none the less was inclined to graciousness and spoke to the girl affably, offering her a supper of cold meat, bread and cheese, and beer.

"I doubt not that I 've earned it," Barbara said, declining the meal a trifle haughtily, "but I am unused to such work and I am tired. Where do I sleep?"

"Highty, tighty!" exclaimed Mistress Dance, in arms at once. "We 'll set it down in the account against the many meals you have eat without payment. Your room is one flight higher than it was before. Up the same stair. You 'll find it smaller, but clean, as all my rooms be."

With a cold "good-night, to you," Barbara lit her dip and mounted the stair.

The attic room to which she went was small indeed, the ceilings slanted so abruptly that, except in one spot, she could not stand upright. Her own possessions had been carried there; but, made wise by Dame Brasher's talk with her husband, she noted that her father's armor and fire-arms were missing.

Determined to be the first astir in the house, for she realized that late rising would now be accounted to her as sloth, she hurried to bed and so wornout was she from her unwonted service that she was asleep in a moment.

True to her resolve, she was up with the first ray of light that pierced her curtainless window, and worked tirelessly till breakfast was served and beds made. Then, trembling inside but outwardly bold, she walked up to Dame Dance.

"I 'm going forth," she said. "I shall take the air instead of my dinner."

There was that in her face that told the woman not to try to stay her, so, ungraciously enough, she nodded her head and the girl set out.

Barbara's plan was a simple one. Having now money to pay to be ferried out to the ship, she determined to go aboard the *Speedwell* and there to claim her place and ask for help in regaining and selling her father's effects.

It is scarce possible to describe her emotions when once again she set foot on the deck of the little vessel.

Her past troubles seemed now so trivial that she looked back upon the days she had spent aboard the *Speedwell* as full of joyousness and sunshine. It seemed to her that she had been very happy and care-free, and, though her father had grown stern and forbidding under his injury at the hands of his kinsman, his thought of her at the end had given her a realization that, behind his repelling exterior there had laid a deep love and concern for her welfare. She longed to be once more among these friendly Pilgrims who, though they might talk of the Lord's will, would nevertheless give her the sympathy she stood in sore need of.

Her first glance about the cluttered decks showed her the people still aboard standing about in groups, talking earnestly and pointing now and then to the *Mayflower* lying at anchor nearby; but there was about them an air of hopelessness, as if they knew not which way to turn.

All greeted her kindly and with the ready sympathy she had anticipated, but she received no word of encouragement when she put forth her plea to be taken back among them. Her truest well-wishers, people she had befriended and whose children she had nursed in the early days of the voyage, were the least sanguine.

"'T is indeed a sad end to all our plans," one of the women told her. "The *Speedwell* is too great a drag upon the *Mayflower* and is to be left behind."

"The *Speedwell* sails to London there to be sold. Those who wish, may go so far in her," a man explained. "For my part, it suits me well to be out of

the whole hapless adventure; but some there be who still wish to change over to the other vessel."

"The *Mayflower* is full already," a woman declared. "'T is for that reason that women and children, and such large families as will not part, are to be weeded out. None but the lustiest men stand any chance to be taken on now, Barbary."

"But mine is such a very special case," Barbara pleaded, while the women nodded agreement.

"But, as Pilgrims, naught can be given consideration but the common cause," one of the company said. "Thou canst not fight the Indians. Thou canst not build huts. Thou canst not till the soil."

"I could nurse the sick," Barbara suggested eagerly. "Master Fuller thought I had great capacity for that."

"There are matrons and mothers a-plenty to take that in hand, and, in a new and healthy land, none need be ill," a man's voice broke in.

"But why dost thou not see Master Fuller, if that is what thou hast in mind? Perchance he might say a word for thee." A friendly soul suggested.

"What sense is there in giving the maid false hopes?" another man asked sharply. "Thou knowest that the *Mayflower* was so beset with petitioners that no visitor is now allowed aboard, and Master Fuller had fallen ill and goeth not forth from his cabin. The maid had better make up her mind to swallow disappointment like the rest of us."

This seemed to be the sum of the advice they had to

offer, and when Barbara timidly broached the subject of her father's armor and other gear, the suggestion was met with indifference. Most of those remaining on board knew that they were not to be chosen for the voyage on the *Mayflower* and had outfits of their own that they were ready and anxious to dispose of. Moreover Barbara was no Dame Brasher. She had not the shopkeeper's knack of piqueing interest in what she had to offer.

She did not prolong her visit to the *Speedwell*. All too soon she perceived that, while the people took a kindly enough interest in her, they were too overwhelmed by their own difficulties to make any active effort in her behalf. She had their good wishes, and that was all they had to give her, and so she took her leave.

Back at the Wooden Sailor she remembered, with a start, the pretty lady in her old room whom she had promised again to visit. Glancing at the sun she was surprised to see what a short time her recent trip had taken, for it was not yet high noon.

She ran upstairs, casting over in her mind whether it would be wise to put her case before this new-made friend. On the whole she decided against it. In the first place the lady, with her curls, and her silken, raiment, and her soft perfumes, was evidently a wordly person, and all of Barbara's Puritan training bade her beware of such. Then she could not forget her father's adjuration to keep even her name secret and leave the town. He had weighty reasons for this.

Moreover what did she know of this attractive stranger? Naught save that she made friends easily, had a ready smile and as ready a tear and — and that she loved her at sight! Aye, even better than she did Charity Towle back in Leyden.

She had raised her hand to knock at the door when a remembrance smote her. To be sure she must tell naught! This lady had said that her husband was a soldier. Sir Ferdinando Gorges, her own false kinsman, was the Military Governor of the port. What then was surer than that whatever news she gave her new friend would sooner or later filter back to him who had caused John Gorges' death?

It behooved her to walk carefully, and her face was both set and anxious when she tapped at the door.

"Enter," cried the soft voice she remembered, and as she pushed the door open her hand was seized and she was dragged within.

"I 'd given over expecting you," the lady cried, "and my husband is such a man of affairs that he hath no time to waste on a mere woman." She pouted at the thought. "I like not my own company," she acknowledged frankly. "Come! Sit! Tell me all about thyself. I long to find a friend, for those with whom I have been of late are too stiff-starched for my liking." The lady made a wry face at which Barbara involuntarily smiled. "What is thy name?" she rattled on. "Mine is Rose."

"It suits you," the girl nodded. "I am called Barbara."

"Barbary," Rose said, "Barbary? I like well the sound of it. But it is so long I think I will call you Bab. Where have you been all this tiresome morning, Bab?"

"I had work to do," Barbara told her, smiling. "You know I owe the innkeeper money, so, rather than increase the debt, I am working now for my keep."

"But for no other wage?" Rose questioned shrewdly. "Eh, then will you always be in bondage with no release in sight."

"I had not thought of that," Barbara acknowledged, startled. "But I have a plan for paying the score ere long. Then will I be free to arrange my future more to my taste."

"Did you work since sun-up?" Rose asked. "Faith, you must be ready to drop."

"No," Barbara assured her, "I have acquaintances aboard one of the vessels in the harbor. I went out to see if they could not aid me, at least with good advice; but they are all in sore trouble themselves and could give little thought to my predicament."

"The very naming of a ship maketh my head to swim," said Rose, shuddering. "Of my own free will I would never set foot on one again, even though they had carried her high and dry upon the land and stuck her in as firm as a church steeple."

"Yet one brought you safe here, through a grievous storm, or so you said last night," Barbara suggested. "You should be grateful to her for setting you at your destination, whence you need sail no more."

"My destination, say you?" Rose broke into unexpected tears. "I would it were! But I am only on land for a day or two because I was so ill of seasickness that they feared for my very life. When the vessel is ready to sail again I will have had my last respite and must set out upon a most frightful voyage. We go through uncharted seas to unknown shores, where fearsome animals abound and a poor thing such as I will shudder her life away."

"Nay, now, Rose, 't is not so bad as thou wouldst like thy little friend to believe. 'T is ever thy strange fancy to indulge thyself by piling up the horrors!" A merry voice broke in upon her recital of the terrors awaiting her, and Myles Standish came gaily into the room and laid his hand upon his wife's shoulder.

CHAPTER VII

BARBARA FALLETH AMONG FRIENDS

THE arrival of Captain Standish served to confirm Barbara's happy suspicion that at last fortune, tired of buffeting her, was serving her a good turn.

"Myles!" cried Mistress Standish, of a sudden all smiles, "when thou art by I am ready to expect naught worse than a land of roses. 'Tis my husband, Bab," she beamed upon the young girl.

"I know Captain Standish," Barbara said, bobbing a shy curtsey.

Standish looked at her and his face lit up with recognition.

"'T is John Gorges's fearful little maid," he exclaimed, then his face grew grave again, for he had heard through Master Fuller, as had all on the *Mayflower,* of Gorges's misadventure, and at once guessed its conclusion from what Rose had told him of her sad little visitor. "My heart bleeds for you, my dear," he said gently. "Your loss is in some measure ours, for we had counted upon your father as one of the mainstays of our venture."

The lump in Barbara's throat prevented a reply and Rose, divining this, in order to divert the talk, broke

in like a spoiled child who must always be the center of attraction.

"I ate no dinner, Myles. Thou wert not here so I could not swallow."

"Then wert thou a disobedient girl," her husband replied with pretended anger, "for my part I have had no time to break my fast and am as empty as that pretty head of thine, so if Mistress Gorges will join us, for I dare swear she hath eaten nothing either, I will go forthwith and order a repast to be brought here."

"Nay, let me go," Barbara insisted. "'T is indeed part of my duty in this establishment."

She ran out of the door and Standish looked to his wife for an explanation of the girl's words.

"Her father was robbed as well as murdered," she told him promptly, "and the girl is left in pawn here for their debt, which she hath not the wherewithal to pay. Thou needs must help her, Myles. She is such a forlorn little maid."

"But where are the fine relations Master Fuller counted on so confidently?" Standish asked. "Sir Ferdinando could make room for her in his train and never feel it."

"She spoke of no relations," Rose declared. "'T is evident they do not mean to be at charges for her."

Meanwhile, below stairs, Barbara had been met by a new storm of reproaches.

"'T is little gratitude one gets," Dame Dance grumbled, "for all one has spent a fortune ungrudgingly. 'T will be a lesson to me never again to do a kind deed."

The arrival of Captain Standish

Barbara interrupted more talk in the same strain by explaining that the guests lodged in her old chamber wished her to bring them food and drink.

"I 'll make it ready," the innkeeper's wife said, somewhat appeased. "Meanwhile do you have an eye to the tap-room and common-room. They be main full for the time of day."

She motioned Barbara to take her seat at a sort of counter, and the girl did so to find that it was slightly elevated above the rest of the room and, in consequence, a fine vantage point for observing all that went on.

She noted not far away the two sailors from the *Speedwell* whom she had recognized the day before. Evidently one of these was in anything but an agreeable frame of mind, and his companion was pleading with him in a hoarse undertone. Barbara took no thought of them at first, but suddenly found her attention drawn to them by reason of their raised voices.

"Nay, she 's as safe as ever she was," the ill-humored fellow blurted out. "I was ready to join with you and vote against the voyage, but I had my price and you 've not paid enough."

"An ye blab," the other retorted, "I 'se warrant your life 's not worth a groat."

"Dost think to scare me with thy threats?" came the question with a reckless laugh. "Nay, my lad, don't waste thy breath. I lay no claim to be honester than most; but why, I ask thee, should Master Reinolds get all the profit?"

At the name of the *Speedwell's* captain Barbara's suspicion became a certainty, and she now strove to catch every word; but for a time the men dropped their tones and she could only distinguish a syllable now and then.

Then, of a sudden, the wranglers threw off restraint once more and Barbara caught all that they were saying.

"Nay, 't was naught but a trick that took us into Dartmouth," cried the first sailor angrily. "Ye might fool a cargo of psalm-singing Puritans with talk of leaks and started seams; but I 'm a seaman!"

"Aye, and a loud-mouthed one, who burns to serve in the wilderness," retorted his companion.

"I signed to do that very thing and 't is in my mind to keep my word," the other answered sturdily.

"But how canst thou serve till they have transported thee to the plantations?" was the demand. "Come, man, fill thy mug and join thy mates. We 're asking naught of thee but to take a bit of drink-money for the greater safety of thy life."

"Aye, but I 'm little minded to see the captain fling a coin here or there to close the mouths of his crew while he fills his pockets with Dutch gold," growled the first sailor. "We voted the ship unsafe, knowing otherwise, and so brake faith for a few paltry stivers. I tell thee flat I 'll not go on with it!"

"Then must thou have thy price," the second seaman said wrathfully, a hand going to his pocket.

"Aye, for I set a just value to my word of honor,"

the other laughed, and stretched out a gnarled fist.

At that moment Dame Dance returned, and Barbara slipped silently down from her perch and took the laden tray.

"Stay you up there and wait upon the gentlefolk," the landlady commanded. "'T is well to show them that we give better service than doth the Tin Soldier."

Heavily laden Barbara mounted the steep stair carefully, albeit she was bursting with impatience to tell Master Standish what she had just discovered. She bumped with her tray against the door, which was straightway opened by Standish, who took her burden from her, having set a table to receive it.

"Captain Standish," she cried at once breathlessly, "this very day I visited the *Speedwell* to claim my old place in its company. There I was told she was to put back for London, and that I could hope for no accommodation on the *Mayflower*, being but a weak and useless girl. Now I am come to beg you to make the *Speedwell* hold to her agreement. She 's seaworthy. The whole complaint of her is a crafty plot arranged by her captain and crew."

She poured forth all she had heard, and Myles Standish nodded his head comprehendingly.

"I pray you be seated," he said, courteously. "We can best consider this weighty matter after we have eaten."

He heaped their platters with food and all ate with a good appetite, albeit Barbara irked at the delay.

At length Standish pushed back his chair.

"You 're sure these seamen were from the *Speedwell?*" he asked, addressing the girl.

"Aye," she answered positively. "Moreover they named Master Reinolds."

"'T is plain the knaves have planned to keep the ship from the voyage," said Rose, "but thou canst set it right, Myles, and hold the villains to their bargain."

"Nay, I shall not raise a hand," her husband answered shortly.

"Dost think I am mistaken then?" asked Barbara in great surprise; for she had thought to have found a clear road ahead of her, and had counted upon rejoining her friends aboard the small vessel.

"I have no doubt that you have reached the kernel of the nut," Standish answered. "Your quarrelsome sailors have but set a seal to what I had suspected."

"Then surely you will not let them carry out their scurvy plan," Rose cried incredulously. 'T will force a goodly part of the company to remain behind!"

"And 't is for that very reason I shall take no action upon the information," Captain Standish replied. "I cannot help but feel that this is a Providential opportunity to rid ourselves of weaklings and of all those who are but half-hearted in this enterprise. As for Master Reinolds and his crew, we should gain only an added danger were we to hold such poltroons to their bargain."

"But there are many who wish to go who will be deprived of the chance," Barbara urged, a feeling of dismay seizing her.

"Aye, that's true," Captain Standish agreed. "There will be room upon the *Mayflower* only for those whose hearts are steeled against all danger and whose strength can be counted upon to withstand the privations we may encounter."

"But —," Rose began, only to be interrupted.

"Nay, there is no 'but'," Myles Standish declared stoutly. "Once more I feel myself a leader of men and I know the value of a picked force." Then he turned to Barbara. "And now, my child, I have no wish to wring your heart unduly, but I must know something of your condition. Why is it that I find you deserted? Master Fuller took it upon himself to write of your situation to your kinsman, the Governor, and we had all thought you in safe and loving hands ere this."

"Sir," said Barbara, "that man is the cause of all my grief. I wish not to throw myself a burden on your bounty, but my father, on his death-bed, commended me to your care."

As briefly as possible she recounted all that had happened since she had landed in Plymouth, including the disappearance of her father's arms and armor.

"Did I not say that flat-faced woman pleased not my fancy?" Mistress Rose asked indignantly. "Heaven send that you twain bring down such a vengeance upon her as will teach all the pilfering innkeepers of Plymouth a lesson for years to come."

"Nay," Standish answered gravely. "I see no way to do that. I conceive that Gorges knew what he

was about when he warned Barbara to conceal her identity. If we raise a great todo over this, we can scarce hope to hide the fact that the heiress for whom we move is one Barbara Gorges, wherefore I judge it would be better that I manage the matter privately and make that fat vrouw see the risks she runneth when she seizeth others' goods without warrant."

"I should like that much better," Barbara declared, "for indeed the little man her husband, he with the pink nose, hath shown a most kindly disposition toward me. I shall never forget his goodness and would be loth to bring trouble upon him, even if I lose somewhat by abstaining."

"Thou art right, my sweet, to remember a kindness," Rose Standish said. "There is naught baser than ingratitude, and the landlord hath truly meant well by thee."

"What I wish most to know," Barbara spoke anxiously, "is that I can count upon enough from the sale of my father's effects to pay our debts. While owing these people money, I could scarce draw back from any task set me; but I like not the service here, and in truth I would be glad to feel free to leave the Wooden Sailor, even though no place is found for me in the expedition."

"But of course a place will be made for thee!" Mistress Standish spoke positively. "Myles will arrange it."

But Myles Standish held up a restraining hand.

"Make no promises in my name that I cannot be

sure of fulfilling, Rose," he said gravely. "Master Carver, and Master Brewster, and others must needs be consulted. For myself, I am firmly of the opinion that we will be strengthened rather than weakened by a reduction of our numbers. I am not sure that I do wisely to take *thee* with me."

"Thou couldst not be so cruel as to leave me behind," cried Rose, bursting into tears, "and as to this poor child, 'tis nothing short of murder to abandon her here in Plymouth to the mercy of her blood-thirsty kin."

She threw her arms around Barbara, who suddenly felt very sorry for herself at the picture drawn by her friend. So the two stood together, silently weeping, while Standish regarded them in comic despair.

"Now what like of creatures are women?" he asked. "Afraid of every shadow that flits across their path. Afraid of the sea, afraid of the ships; afraid of the very country of their nativity; but moved to despair at the thought that they may chance to be prohibited from visiting the wilderness, which yet, in their hearts, they fear above all else!" He seized his hat. "I will return, but scarce before night-fall," he said, and as he left the room he called back to Barbara, "fear not for your expenses, my child. Your father had one corslet which I often envied him. It alone is worth enough to rid you of embarrassment. I will arrange that affair ere I do aught else, so from now on you are free of debt and may come and go as pleaseth you."

Standish having departed, his wife dried her tears in a very businesslike way.

"I always cry when I want anything from Myles," she explained. "He cannot bear to see me weep; but I 'm not sure of thy place in the ship, my sweet. Myles hath such a conscience, he might almost as well be a Puritan. 'T is evident that he thinks the party will be stronger once it is purged of the half-hearted." She pondered the point for a moment, then shook herself resolutely, as if to push away unwelcome thoughts.

"I would not have Captain Standish affront his conscience on my account," Barbara said, at which Rose laughed loud and long.

"What a dear little Puritan thou art!" she cried. "Nay, we 'll spare Master Myles's conscience if we can; but by hook or by crook I mean thee to travel to Virginia by my side, and what Rose Standish setteth her heart on, that she hath, be well assured."

CHAPTER VIII

ROSE WINNETH HER WILL

FROM this time on Barbara was no longer alone. She was adopted as a member of the Standish party and was as happy as one so recently bereaved could possibly be.

Captain Standish disposed of her father's gear to good advantage and gave into her own hand the substantial sum that remained over. Thereafter Barbara could scarce forbear a smile when shiny Dame Dance made way for her in the corridors, standing close against the wall and dropping obsequious curtsies the while. The girl never wasted a thought on possible resentment on the woman's part, knowing herself safe under the protection of a man like Captain Standish. In truth Dame Dance, while regretting the loss of a fat profit on the arms and armor, knew that she had been lucky to escape without punishment for her unwarranted appropriation of Barbara's valuables; wherefore she contented herself with dark allusions to "the serpent who bit the hand that fed it," when her husband rejoiced openly that his "little missy" had found such powerful friends.

But as time passed and the *Speedwell,* definitely abandoned by such of her passengers as did not wish

to go to London in her, had sailed, it became increasingly evident that there was going to be no place on the *Mayflower* for Barbara. Storm and weep as she might, threaten to carry the girl on board and stow her away, Rose could make no impression on Myles. The most she could get from him was a promise that if they found themselves with a roof to their heads the following year she might send for her "Bab" to come to them.

The time for their departure was very near. Standish had made arrangements to ship Barbara back to the care of the Reverend Master Robinson in Leyden, where doubtless a suitable home would be found for her. He had thought this the safest plan, for it had come to his knowledge that, while the *Speedwell* rode at anchor off the Barbican, engaged in the transfer of stores and passengers to the *Mayflower,* inquiries had been made aboard her for young Mistress Gorges. The answer being given that the girl had abandoned the ship, the visitors had gone away; but Standish, connecting this with John Gorges's statement ere he died that he had befooled his enemies into believing Barbara had escaped from their clutches, was sure that the failure of the *Speedwell* to sail again having seemingly thrown her into their power once more an immediate effort to find her had been made which fortunately had failed. Myles therefore reasoned that she would be safer out of England; but, seeing nothing to be gained by informing her of his discovery, he kept the sinister news to himself, only arranging that

she should sail before he did in order that he might be well assured of her safety.

"Never before, never!" said Rose severely, "did Myles disappoint me on so serious a question. 'T is useless to tell me that there is no room on that great vessel for one little maid. This is certain. I will have to take matters into my own hands or thou wilt be shipped into the Low Countries under my very eyes."

"You know I go tomorrow," protested Barbara.

"I know naught of the sort," Rose retorted. "Thou canst not be so ungrateful as to leave me. Thou art well aware that thou art all that reconciles me to this mad expedition. If thou art with us, I do not need to worry over Myles. Should a wild tiger eat me, there will be some one at hand to darn his stockings and mend his ruffles."

"Captain Standish saith you will see no tigers," Barbara laughed comfortably. "And as to stockings, you told me he was in dire need of new ones. I thought we were going into the town to buy wool."

"So we are," returned Rose briskly. "Let us start at once."

"I want also to buy a farewell present for Master Dance," Barbara said. "I thought a tankard with 'From his grateful Guest' wrote on it, might pleasure him."

"'T is a sweet thought," Rose agreed, easily moved by any tender sentiment; "for the man was most kindly, and doubtless ran some risk of censure from

his flat-faced wife. We 'll buy the tankard first and select the wool on our homeward way."

It was in the draper's shop that Mistress Standish felt her elbow seized in a tight clasp and turned to look into the drawn face of a nervous, excited woman.

"I crave your pardon, mistress," this person said, dropping humble curtsies as she spoke, "but I be nigh crazed with terror. It be n't true that we are to start again on that fearsome voyage?"

"Yea," Rose answered kindly, "we start within twenty-four hours."

The woman wrung her hands.

"I had based such high hopes on this return to England," she muttered feverishly. "What be I to do? What be I to do? Each wave hits as it were on my defenseless head. E'en in my sleep they follow me, reaching out cold fingers to drag me down to the great fish, who never shut their eyes but watch and watch for me."

As in a daze the woman stood, gnawing her nails and whispering to herself of the sunlight and the quiet and the safe, flat lands of the Low Countries; while Rose and Barbara stood by looking at her pityingly.

"In truth the poor wretch dreads the sea more than I do," Rose murmured, then she spoke kindly to the woman. "Who are you?" she asked. "I 've seen your face, I know."

Brought to herself for a moment the woman dropped another curtsey.

"I 'm only Meg, Mistress Carver's maid-servant.

She sent me in to town to buy another leathern bottle and some linsey-woolsey," she answered plainly enough, but at once dropped back into her muttering. "To think my mother's child should go to her death for lack of a few pounds. Sold I be. Sold to the fishes! Nor ever will live to reach the promised land Master Robinson talked of."

"Why then do you go back to the *Mayflower?*" Rose asked unexpectedly.

Meg drew herself up proudly.

"I be an honest wench for all I be a bond-servant," she said. "I 've sat under Master Robinson for instruction. Better that my body should feed the fishes than my soul the fires of hell. Master Carver paid the price for me, while I live he shall not be defrauded."

Then she fell to muttering, seemingly oblivious to all about her.

"Bab," cried Rose excitedly, her eyes dancing, "I said well that I needs must take matters into my own hands, if thou wert to sail on the *Mayflower*. Here is our chance — and will not Master Myles be confounded?"

"Our chance?" Barbara spoke breathlessly. "What chance is there here?"

"'T is plain enough," Rose whispered. "Myles hath given thee a solid sum that he got for thy father's goods. All that thou needst to do is to buy back this poor creature's bond and set her free. She can take thy place and return to the Netherlands, which she

longs for. Thou canst take hers and sail on the *Mayflower*. No one will be wronged thereby, for I need no more than the evidence of my eyes to prove to me that the Carvers will have small use of her if she sails with them. She will go mad or die of horror."

"Do you think it would be honorable for me to buy her freedom?" Barbara hesitated.

"I think it would be a most kindly action," Rose answered promptly. "Thou wilt save the Carvers all that they have expended. The woman's life and tottering reason will be spared and — and — not of the least importance, my heart will not be broken."

"Your plan will leave Mistress Carver without a maid-servant," said Barbara thoughtfully. "Belike if this woman were freed they would wish to fill her place."

"Bab," Rose snapped, "did I not tell thee plain that thou wert saving the Carvers from loss from death or madness? For that they should be grateful. How can they engage another hand-maiden if thou art to have this one's place? Moreover there is naught to prevent thee from taking upon thyself the offices of a daughter to Dame Carver if thou art so minded. She is a gentle, kindly old woman, and I doubt not I can engage her interest for thee."

To this plan Barbara was finally persuaded. All that remained was to arrange with the woman, Meg, and bind her to secrecy.

Her passionate relief and gratitude were almost painful to witness. It was as though one condemned

to death upon the scaffold had suddenly been given, not only his freedom but the wish of his heart as well. She was to return to the Low Countries. Once more she would see the land her heart longed for. She did not demand that she should be told the details. Indeed her poor brain was so full of joy that it is doubtful if it could take aught else in. Her passionate loyalty was now Barbara's, and she pledged herself to do as she was bid without question.

So much of their plan was thus safe. It remained to keep it from the knowledge of Captain Standish until it was too late to alter it. Full well they knew that he had no intention of allowing Barbara to undertake the trip to the plantations. He was a very masterful man, and should he get wind of the scheme, even at the last moment, he was quite capable of packing her off to Leyden, willy-nilly.

Fortune favored them in a measure. The next morning a messenger came post-haste seeking Standish. After consultation with this lad, Myles turned to his wife with a wrinkled brow.

"This is most vexatious," he said. "I cannot go with Barbara aboard the *Neeltje,* the boat which is to carry her back to Delfes Haven."

"Now that is too bad," said naughty Rose, inwardly delighted at this chance which had removed one of her chief difficulties, "but when wilt thou learn, Myles, that I am a matron, quite capable of aiding thee in thy perplexities? I myself will arrange to deliver Barbara aboard the boat."

"You a matron!" Myles pinched her cheek. "Thou art a child, and a spoiled child at that! However, for once I will have to take thee at thy word. More than that, an I am not here by sundown, thou must engage a porter and a waterman and get thyself back to the *Mayflower*. I greatly fear I may be kept till late on this affair."

"Have no anxiety," said Rose condescendingly. "My shoulders are broad. I can arrange that and any other business you may lay on them."

"Then say good-by to Barbara for me," Myles suggested quickly. Man-like he feared a scene, and indeed he had grown fond enough of the child to regret the necessity of parting with her.

"I will," Rose agreed, vainly trying to hide her dancing eyes. Her husband paused in the doorway and looked at her suspiciously.

"Now what so amuseth thee?" he asked, with some curiosity.

"It amuseth me to learn," Rose replied quickly, "that I am not the only craven in the Standish family. The great captain himself feareth the reproaches of a little maid."

"Nay then, Rose, pity me a little," Myles retored boyishly. "I dread her tears. Tell her to be happy and that thou wilt send for her as soon as may be." He bolted from the room, followed by his wife's merry laughter.

Vastly enjoying the success of her plotting, Rose spent a very satisfactory day. Meg had obtained per-

mission from good old Mistress Carver to enjoy a last holiday ashore. Hiding her meagre possessions under a cloak, she had landed in Plymouth, and one short hour thereafter was on the *Neeltje* on her way out of the harbor.

On Rose's advice, Barbara had bought the woman a new cloak and taken her old one by way of disguise until she was safely settled on the *Mayflower*.

"It remaineth now to give Myles the slip should he return to take me back to the ship," Mistress Standish said. "I do not mean to go out to the *Mayflower* till after dark, so that once safe aboard thou canst go to bed straightaway."

"How can you manage that?" asked Barbara.

"I shall order a present for Myles and tell the shopkeeper that I will come back for it this evening. I shall send thy goods and mine to be loaded on the wherry, making the porter chargeable for them till I come there to pay him. And then I shall take my own good time!" Mistress Standish said cheerfully. "If Myles findeth me not at the Wooden Sailor he will go out to the ship to seek me."

"Will not Master Standish be over-anxious?" Barbara asked, looking a trifle uneasy.

"Nay, I 'm too big a child to be lost," Rose answered amiably, laughing in her face. "Myles is used to my ways. He may scold, but if he does I will weep, so we shall be quits."

Indeed her plans were carried out in detail. She ordered a furred coat for her husband and spent some

hours waiting for it to be completed to suit her fancy, so that it was even later than they had expected when, having made sure that all their packages were safe, she paid her porter and they were rowed out across the harbor.

"Myles will be in a fume," his wife giggled, "but how could I know that his jacket would take so long to border? He 'll be waiting for us at the ladder-head. Do thou pull thy hood close, bob a curtsey and leave the talking to me. Thou mightst say 'thankee kindly, mistress,' if thou couldst manage to make thy voice coarse and common."

"I think I had better be silent," Barbara said nervously. "It would be too bad if I betrayed myself now."

"Thou must not risk it!" Rose took alarm at once. "But do thou follow me as closely as thou darest, and I will point thee where to bestow thyself for the night. I trust Mistress Carver will be a-bed, for, if possible, I would defer our explanation to her till it is too late to send thee back; though, if worst come to worst, I doubt not I can coax her to my way of thinking."

The lights of the *Mayflower* twinkled across the waters as their boat neared her and when they drew in to her side Myles Standish looked down at them anxiously, even as his wife had predicted.

"Rose, is it thou?" he called. "Why art thou so late? I 've been trying for the last half hour to summon a boat to go in search of thee."

"'T is all because of a present I bought for thee,"

Rose called out gaily. "I 'm here and none the worse, though later than I had counted on being; but, as it is my last outing, thou must e'en forgive me." She mounted the ladder briskly as she spoke.

"Who is that with thee?" asked Standish, with a sudden vague suspicion.

"'T is one of the Carvers' train," Rose answered unblushingly. "I knew that thou wouldst take it ill if I were alone so late, so kept the woman beside me."

"Now that at any rate was well thought of," Standish conceded as they went below.

Barbara took one quick look around the deck ere she followed them. The *Mayflower* was more commodious than the *Speedwell,* that was evident at once. To the girl's eyes it seemed a great vessel, and she sighed with contentment to find herself safely on board of her instead of sailing back to Leyden on the *Neeltje.*

And thus it came to pass that one Barbara Gorges, although not entered on the ship's lists, sailed out of Plymouth harbor on the good ship *Mayflower* on September the sixth, 1620, bound for an unknown land, unknown hardships and unknown adventures; yet happy withal.

CHAPTER IX

A VOYAGE OF MIXED FORTUNES

THE next day broke clear and beautiful with winds so light as scarcely to ruffle the waters. Even such bad sailors as Rose felt no discomfort and were able to be on deck and enjoy themselves.

Mistress Standish had lost no time in seeking out Mistress Carver and enlisting her sympathy for Barbara. As it happened the elder lady was well content to be rid of her serving-maid, who had proven worse than useless on the earlier part of the voyage; so with her money in hand, she was pleased to express herself as glad that Barbara was to have Meg's place and to spend considerable sympathy on the girl and her sad fortunes.

Rose, delighted with the impression she had made in that quarter, went in search of Barbara to make her known to her new patroness; but hunt as she would she could not find her. She was becoming genuinely alarmed when she perceived a spaniel and a mastiff, the only live stock with the party, sniffing and scratching to get behind the long-boat where it was set on the deck. Stooping to see what was exciting the dogs, she caught side of the girl crouched in hiding back of the boat.

"Now why art thou cuddled there?" she asked, surprised. "Art ill from the motion of the ship?"

"No, no," Barbara replied in a low tone, "go hence and leave me, else will Captain Standish see me. I escaped him by a hair's breadth just now, and even yet I shake as with the palsey."

Rose straightened up in astonishment, then she bent down again.

"But thou canst not make the voyage to the plantations beneath the long-boat," she said sensibly. "Come forth, child. Why shouldst thou fear Myles? He will not eat thee without salt."

Thus adjured Barbara crept out and stood at Rose's side.

"It seemeth so ungrateful not to have done as he bade me," she said miserably. "My shame dismayed me and I dared not face him."

"Glad am I that you did not meet when I was not by to see," Rose chuckled. "I would not for worlds miss Myles's face when he learns how I have bested him. Come now and let us seek him boldly and have it over with."

She tucked her hand within Barbara's arm and drawing the girl with her along the deck soon came up back of her husband.

"Myles," she cried joyously, "I have here a friend I wish to make known to thee. Mistress Surprise and Delight, this is the renowned Captain Myles Standish."

Mechanically Standish wheeled and bowed, then

raising his head he looked into Barbara's eyes. The girl was staring at him with so comical an expression of childish terror that he burst into a hearty laugh and turned at once upon Rose, shaking a finger at her chidingly.

"This is thy doing, thou naughty wife," he said. "Something told me yesterday that thou wert bent on mischief. Well now 't is done, I will no longer conceal my joy that thou art to have a companion." He took Barbara's hand kindly and at once set her at ease. "Indeed, Mistress Surprise and Delight, had I followed my own wishes I should have arranged to bear you with us by hook or by crook; but it seemed selfish to pleasure my Rose at your expense, so I set my face against it."

"Then you are not altogether sorry that I am here?" Barbara faltered.

"Not I," Standish returned, "wherefore I suppose I must forgive Rose nor ask Master Jonas, our good ship's Captain, to have her placed in chains for insubordination to her superior officer."

"The master would not do it!" cried Rose, "for well he knoweth who is in command here." And she made a childish face at Myles, while Barbara marveled, as she often did, at the light-hearted equality between them. It was not the Puritan way to allow the wife to boast unrebuked of her ascendency over her lord and master.

"Well, the murder 's out," Myles said good-

humoredly. "It remains to be explained how you twain bested me."

"Time enough for that," Rose replied with a wave of her hand. "I go now to make Bab known to Mistress Carver. 'T is to their party she is attached."

The two girls went off together, and thus auspiciously was the journey begun. There ensued a number of days of fine weather with prosperous winds, and it was well the voyagers had these happy days to look back upon for thereafter there was little enough of pleasure in the passage.

Those who had planned the voyage of the *Mayflower* had counted upon fair summer weather, but the delay of a month or more in starting brought the Pilgrims all the Autumn gales they had hoped to escape. For days the winds beat up gigantic seas that pounded the little vessel without cessation. Night and day she tossed upon the restless ocean, driven out of her course, her sails rent by sudden squalls, her timbers wrenched from stem to stern. Often she was forced to run before the storm under bare poles drifting hither and yon upon the heaving deep, Master Jonas intent only upon keeping her afloat. During any lull in this fierce onslaught the frail craft would be put once more upon her course, patched sails spread upon the bent rigging, only to be quickly furled again as a fresh gale drove them to run before it for very life's sake.

The weather went from bad to worse and at length,

during the equinoctial storm, the tempest grew so fierce that the end of the brave company seemed near.

In the cabin the Pilgrims lifted up their voices in prayer, steeling their hearts to meet the danger bravely and trusting to Him they worshiped to still the angry waters that raged about them.

Of a sudden there came a sharp sound of rent wood as the little vessel, lifted high on a gigantic wave, crashed down into the hollow below it, and a sudden checking of the ship's weight threw the pious company to the floor.

With quick-beating hearts and held breath they waited, counting death at hand and hearing amid the awful clamor of the elements, the frightened shouts of the men on the deck above their bowed heads.

"We are lost! We are lost!" The cry smote upon the ears of the trembling passengers, and into the cabin rushed the crew, half-mad with panic.

"Pray to thy God to save us!" they yelled. "Pray! Pray! For naught more can we do!"

"Nay," shouted Myles Standish above the babble, "I have ever heard that the Lord our God standeth ready to help those who try to help themselves. Back to the deck and serve the ship!"

"But she is nigh broken in twain," one seaman croaked.

"She leaketh beyond saving," another groaned.

"The main beam in the midships is bowed and cracked," a third proclaimed, lifting his voice in a dismal wail.

"Enough," thundered Standish. "If the vessel is as you say, the more need then for men to caulk the seams and stiffen the decks. We Pilgrims have a great iron screw, brought out of Holland, that will meet our present needs; so, if there be any men among you, they will follow me!"

He ran from the cabin followed by all the sailors, who, for very shame, were driven to match his dauntless spirit.

In the end wonders were accomplished and the little *Mayflower* was saved; for when the great iron screw was set in place, a post was cut and braced to support the buckling beam, and once more the ship's bows were turned towards the west.

Amid these trials Barbara Gorges found a strengthening of her spirit. Not that she grew into an Amazon for courage; but she no longer trembled at imaginary horrors. The realities she faced from day to day left scant opportunity for the contemplation of anticipated ills. Every hour, for weeks at a time, she was conscious of the possibility of a sudden death in the tumbling waters raging about her; but at hand she had examples of brave resignation, for these Pilgrims believed what they professed, and complained not, bowing their heads to the will of God and ready to meet their fate in whatever guise their Divine Master might be pleased to send it.

Although Barbara was now nominally attached to the Carver family, circumstances brought her into close association with Myles Standish and his wife. The

rough weather had forced all the women and children below decks, where their discomfort was extreme. In the foul air of the cabin Mistress Rose drooped like a flower cut from its stem and, like that same flower, faded daily. Her playful spirit deserted her, she grew silent, almost moody, and while she had ever a pale smile for Barbara and her husband, they both watched her with an anxiety they tried vainly to conceal.

"I think she looks better today," the doughty captain would declare, as he and Barbara stood outside the tiny closet in which Rose lay.

"I hope so," the girl would answer, with as much conviction in her tone as she could summon; but each saw in the eyes of the other the shadow of a dread they never mentioned, and Myles would turn away with a sigh and go on deck.

So, in this wise, a conspiracy of silence grew up between Captain Standish and the young girl who had devoted herself to his wife. Moreover they always spoke cheerfully to Rose, made light of her illness and prophesied a quick recovery when once she was on land again.

"But shall we ever reach the shore?" the invalid questioned wearily.

"Aye, fear not," declared her husband, with an assumption of heartiness he scarce felt.

"Oh, but I am weary of this tossing," she murmured over and over again.

"It hath been told me," Barbara said, hoping to

change the topic of conversation, "that many strange animals abound in this new land."

"Aye," Myles answered cheerily, "but harmless creatures enough."

"Priscilla Mullens spoke yesterday of multitudes of poisonous snakes," Barbara ventured timidly.

"Nay, then, there's no such thing!" the captain declared roundly. "I doubt not there are a few small snakes such as are found in all lands. I was once in converse with a man who had been upon an expedition to America with Captain John Smith, and he vowed the country is full of fruits and flowers, a very Eden, lacking only the serpents."

Beside his prostrate wife Myles sat by the hour, recounting to the two girls tales he had heard of the new shore toward which they were journeying. He encouraged them to look forward to a happy, healthful life upon a virgin soil out of which would spring undreamed of prosperity and peace. Of the dangers he knew they might expect, of privations to be endured and of hardships he anticipated, he said nothing, but kept a cheerful countenance, predicting joyful years to come and a return of strength for Rose when once the voyage was ended.

These talks heartened Barbara to meet with fortitude all that might befall, and she vied with Myles in showing Rose only the pleasant side of their condition, treating as lightly as she was able the perils she knew surrounded them.

Of what went on outside the little cabin in which Mistress Standish lay, she told only those happenings which would serve to bring a smile. Thus when a baby was born who was named Oceanus, she went straightway to her patient with the news, or when John Howland was miraculously saved from drowning, Barbara used it as an instance to show that the Pilgrims might still trust in the Divine protection, thus plainly made manifest. But of the death of William Button, man-servant to Master Fuller, or of the sailor who had been struck down, she said nothing.

And at last after sixty-three days at sea the land was sighted from the deck of the *Mayflower*. On their knees the Pilgrims thanked God for their safe arrival, although it was soon discovered that this shore was not their true destination, they having come far to the North of their grant in North Virginia on the bank of Hudson's great river, to fall in with a barren country known to them as "Cap-Codd," being so called because of the vast quantities of that fish caught thereabout.

A controversy at once arose between Master Jonas, captain of the vessel, who urged a landing, pleading the poor condition of his ship, and the leaders of the company, who demanded to be set down on their own grant; but, after a prolonged argument, it was agreed to go on.

And now once again the winds strangely refused to favor them. While trying to round the great cape they were driven among shoals and like to founder,

Master Jonas and his crew taking pains to proclaim aloud the danger in which they found themselves until dismay spread among the Pilgrim band.

"Myles was right and not I," Rose said mournfully. "It was selfishness that bade me bring thee here. Oh, Bab, I can't regret it, for thou art all the comfort I have. I know that for my sake thou wilt have a care over Myles when I am gone."

Her husband had carried her on deck, avowedly that she should be heartened by a glimpse of the land, but really that he might the more readily reach her side should the *Mayflower* strike. Thus it was from a nest of shawls among which she lay, that she looked up at the girl with appealing eyes.

"Talk not so mawkishly," Barbara returned sturdily, albeit her heart ached for her friend. "We 're near to land. Soon you will be quite yourself again and the first to laugh at such weak fears."

"I do not come of a long-lived stock," Rose answered, shaking her head. "'T is useless to deceive thyself, Barbara dear. I 'm going soon, nor would I have it otherwise. My life has been all happiness, and I know that I am no fit helpmate for Myles in the rough tasks that are to come." She shivered, and Barbara sprang to wrap her more closely. "'T is but a breath of cold wind off the shore," Barbara murmured, and Standish coming up just then, Barbara repeated Rose's words to him.

"Perchance she felt it first, being so tender," Standish said, wetting a finger and holding it aloft to test

the breeze. "An it cometh, it will be just what is needed."

He looked anxiously over the vessel's side at the shoaling water, and Barbara realized that their position must be one of some peril so to move him; but, for Rose's sake, she hid her own fears and tried to talk happily of feeling solid earth beneath the feet once more, of flowers, of birds, of all the hundred joys of being on land, in which, after a space, Standish seconded her.

Suddenly he jumped to his feet with a glad exclamation.

"Thou art a true prophet, Rose!" he exclaimed. "See, the *Mayflower's* head is coming round. We 're pointing out to sea!"

"But I 've had enough and more than enough of the sea," pouted Rose, with a little of her old petulance. "'T is the shore I long for."

"That thou shalt have right soon," Standish declared happily, "in all good time," and he went off to join a number of the elders who were in consultation together, seeking a solution of the greatest present difficulty.

A decision was finally come to that, although they knew this to be New England and governed by a different company than that under which they held their grant, as all the forces of nature seemed to be arrayed against their reaching Hudson's River and their land on its shore, it would be wise to seek a safe harbor and from it make exploration of the surrounding

country with a view to finding a suitable place to plant their settlement.

This was a decision very agreeable to Master Jonas, who repeatedly assured them that they would not regret it and also told them he had knowledge of a fine anchorage, which they could hope to make next day and which had been explored by Captain John Smith in one of his voyages some years earlier.

So it came to pass that on November the eleventh, 1620, the good ship *Mayflower* at last swung to her anchor off the shores of America, and the prayers of the company that night were prayers of thanksgiving; a solemn praise meeting being held aboard the boat. Two days later a voluntary compact to frame and abide by just and equal laws was signed by all the more considerable men.

Master Jonas now most churlishly refused to cruise along the coast in the *Mayflower,* giving as his excuse the lack of a chart of the waters; so it was determined to take the shallop ashore and repair it, leaving the carpenter to work on it while some of the others explored the beach.

Rose Standish, fretting at every delay, demanded of Myles that she be put in the shallop when she saw it brought on deck preparatory to towing it to land; but her husband shook his head.

"Listen to sweet reason, my child," he said. "We were forced to cut the boat down in bestowing her betwixt the decks and she is much opened by the people lying in her. Thou art scarce hearty enough to stand

the soaking thou wouldst get shouldst thou attempt to sail aboard her. Be patient yet a little longer."

With these words he ran off to take his place in the waiting long-boat. Barbara watched it as it neared the shore and was astonished to see it come to so short a stop that some of the men were shot out of their places, one even landing with a splash in the water. The reason for the accident was plain enough. The bay shoaled so rapidly that all the passengers were forced to step out and wade, and Barbara shook her head anxiously. It was not a good beginning for a long tramp in the icy wind that was blowing.

However, there was no way to better matters, so she did not mention it to Rose.

"They 're safe ashore," she told her friend reassuringly, which news so satisfied Rose that she dropped off into a sound slumber.

Time hung heavy on Barbara's hand. In the long voyage she had knit up the wool Rose had bought, and had mended all she could find to mend in the Carver outfit as well as among the Standish belongings, so now she joined Mary Chilton and Priscilla Mullens, who were leaning over the rail and watching the fish swimming in the clear water beside the vessel.

"'T is an idle life," she said with a sigh. "I shall be glad when we land and are set to work."

"The master told Mistress Carver that, if the party met no hostile savages, we would be let ashore on Monday to do our washing with good elbow-room for the nonce," Mary announced.

"I would like that right well," Priscilla cried. "'T would be fine to slap the linen with a bat once more and set it to whiten in the sun."

The long-boat, in charge of John Clarke, the mate, was about to return to the shore with some carpenter's stores. The officer, happening to glance up at the three eager faces gazing over the side, at once called an invitation.

"Will ye take a boat ride?" he asked. "If so, step aboard, but say naught or the long-boat will be swamped with volunteers."

Overjoyed at this chance, Mary and Priscilla hastened down the ladder. Barbara cast a glance at Rose and, seeing that she slept soundly, she too was unable to resist such a temptation and hurried to take her place in the boat with the others.

When the shoal water was reached, John Alden, the young cooper who was helping the carpenter on the strand, ran to the verge and warned them off. He had been doing a little exploring on his own account and motioned them to row to the westward where shortly, the tide being up, they found deeper water and so beached the boat without mishap. Not waiting for any invitation, the three young girls were out on the sand in an instant, Mary Chilton leading them in their flight.

"Here! Here!" shouted the mate. "This is more than I bargained for. Do ye want to get me in hot water with the master?"

"We 'll not go out of sight," the girls answered

laughingly. "Pray give us leave to stretch our limbs, after so many weeks at sea."

"Well, be off then," the mate relented, "no one I think will blame me if I let you run a little."

"An they do, we promise to tell them that thou canst manage a ship better than a boatload of females," said Priscilla Mullens pertly.

Inwardly naming her a saucy baggage the mate disdained to answer, so, with linked arms, the three girls ran up the beach.

"Look!" cried Barbara, pointing, "it will be easy to follow our explorers by their tracks in the sand."

"Shall we go after them?" Mary asked, starting forward in that direction.

"Nay," Barbara suggested, "why not turn the other way; then we will have a tale of our own to tell."

This they did and went a short distance without discovering aught to interest them. Then Barbara drew her arm from Priscilla's.

"I 'm going to search among the bushes to see if perchance I can find a flower for Rose," she said.

"Thou art far more like to find a deadly serpent," Mary suggested, but Barbara shook her head positively.

"Captain Standish saith that snakes are not more numerous than they are in Holland or in England," she explained, "moreover he tells me they are timid and will run from me if I give them the chance." Indeed Myles Standish had been at pains to dissect and dispose of as many of Barbara's fears as possible.

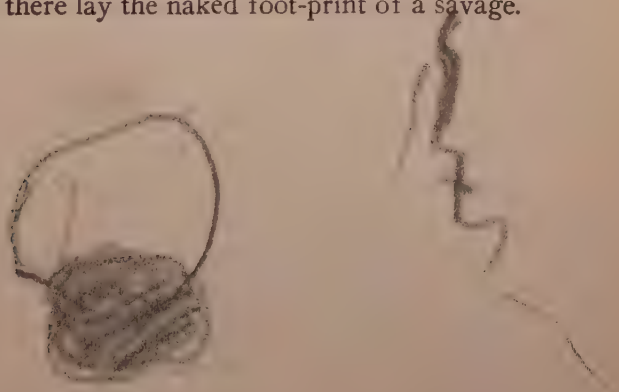
"Then see that thou givest them that chance," said

the pert Priscilla, hopping sidewise over a crooked stick. "For my part, 't is I who shall do the running if I meet one."

Barbara edged along beside the scrubby bushes, seeing nothing flower-like save a few gaily colored leaves that fell at her first touch.

Suddenly, however, she saw a small mound of sand that looked damp as though it had recently been overturned. Somewhere the girl had heard of turtle's eggs as a great delicacy occasionally found by seamen on strange beaches and, thinking what a blessing it would be if she could return with some fresh food to tempt Rose's fitful appetite, she dropped to her knees and scattered the sand from side to side anxiously.

In a moment she stopped and glanced about her. What she had uncovered was strange to her; but it was not turtle's eggs; and side by side with her own foot-print there lay the naked foot-print of a savage.



CHAPTER X

INDIAN CORN

THAT Barbara did not scream at the sight of the print of a bare foot beside her was another sign that she had taken to heart some of the lessons Myles had so faithfully preached through the long voyage.

She examined the track in the sand carefully, concluding from the size of it that a child must have been that way within a short time of her coming.

And, if a child had been there, others might be on the watch. Instinctively she raised her eyes, half expecting to encounter the wild savages she felt were near; but her gaze could not penetrate the barrier of scrubby growth that bordered the beach.

For an instant her timidity threatened to get the better of her and she was on the point of fleeing.

"Nay," she told herself, "Captain Standish said that Indians and snakes are much the same. Both timid unless they are molested."

Resolved to go on with her investigation, Barbara stooped over the hole she had dug.

She had exposed a basket of strange workmanship, full of dried kernels which she would have taken to be those of some sort of nut had not there also been a few sticks thrown hastily on top to which similar kernels adhered.

It was evident that this was some sort of grain and doubtless it was edible. She would take with her a few kernels and one of the strange sticks to show Captain Standish. No one would grudge her that, and she would cover the remainder carefully again, so that if she were watched, as she felt that probably she was, it would be evident she was not a robber and meant no harm.

As quick as the thought she acted upon it. When she returned to the girls with the suggestion that they had gone far enough from the boat, she had the precious grains safe in her pocket, and though she knew not what they were, she felt sure they were ample justification of the trip ashore. Only food would be gathered and hidden so carefully, and food was one of the notable lacks of their expedition. If she had learned where to seek for a supply of such grains she had made a very valuable discovery.

The return of the girls to the ship was followed ere long by the return of the explorers. Myles listened to Barbara's tale, then he took one of the grains and chewed it.

"'T is new to me, but sweet and good," he said thoughtfully.

"I ne'er saw grains growing on a stick," Rose remarked, handling the cob with great interest. "Dost think it can be ground into flour, Myles?"

"Of that I am assured," he answered. "'T is good food, or the Indians would not be so careful to preserve it."

"That was in my mind, also," Barbara explained, a little excited at the sensation her discovery was making.

"Think you there is more of it where you found this?" Standish questioned. "'T is no small matter to come across this native product."

"I doubt if there be other stores where this is hidden," Barbara replied, "though full, 't is but a smallish basket such as might be carried by a child, who, being alarmed at our approach, secreted her treasure and fled. The foot-print was meagre, and the sand covering the basket seemed as if new-paddled with the hands."

"Didst mark the place?" Myles questioned further.

"Aye, well," the girl returned, "but I 'm sure eyes I did not see watched my every movement."

Rose shuddered and gave a little cry of fear.

"Thou wert most wonderous brave, Bab," she said. "I vow I know not how thou heldst back from screaming."

"Indeed I felt dismay creeping over me," Barbara confessed, "and then I told myself that even a wild child would scarce have fangs like a fierce dog to tear me withal. Moreover why waste breath in screams that would bring no help? Rather the reverse, for at my first call I am persuaded that both Mary and Priscilla would have taken to their heels and thus left me without even the protection of numbers."

At this Myles laughed uproariously. The workings of the female mind always caused him great amuse-

ment; but he quickly sobered and questioned Barbara again.

"Are you sure you can point out the place where this basket you spoke of was concealed?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," she replied, "but I think, Captain Standish, it will be small use to look. By this time I doubt not it has been removed."

"Aye, that 's likely," Myles agreed, "still, I shall see for myself. I had meant to give over further exploration of this sandy waste but now I am resolved otherwise."

"From what I heard the others say thou art like to find opposition to that plan," Rose told him.

"Mayhap," he answered lightly, "nevertheless I shall insist. And I charge you both," he went on in an undertone, "keep silent as to the reason for my desire. 'T is not needful to let it be known by all that we seek a valuable supply of food lest we find naught and so bring disappointment."

As Mistress Standish had predicted, there was some grumbling at her husband's determination to continue his search about the land, but he prevailed at length and so it came about that out of Barbara's discovery grew the expedition that finally traversed Cape Cod.

Captain Standish with William Bradford and fifteen other well-armed men, each with musket, sword and corslet, set out upon a more thorough exploration, though with a grudging permission rather than approval upon the part of the other Pilgrims.

Through a pathless waste they plodded on, until they met six Indians and a dog, who fled before them with every evidence of fear. At the direction of Standish they took up the trail of these savages, toiling through matted undergrowth, struggling for each forward step against the trees and low bushes that tried to hold them back, and finally reaching the Atlantic seaboard at night, tired and weary from their difficult marching with nothing to show for their labors.

The next morning they again took up the Indians' track and followed on through dense thickets until the men, beset with thirst and weighted with their heavy armor, staggered from fatigue. Standish, with the strength of two men, urged his followers onward, taking the lead and calling back words of encouragement, until faint and well-nigh spent, they came unexpectedly upon a small pond.

With shouts of joy the men ran forward to moisten their parched throats.

"'T is the first New England water we have drunk!" cried one of the men when his thirst was slaked.

"Aye, and as pleasant as wine or beer in the foretimes," another answered, and in a little, with new strength and courage, they took up their journey.

But ere they had explored the pond in its entire length they came to a cornfield, a number of Indian graves and the remains of a ruined hut, which had probably been built by some ship's crew, for they found a large iron kettle of European make within it.

These things were of interest and led to much specu-

lation; but to Standish they scarcely justified their toil and suffering. He was searching for food, and to this end continued his investigations while the others rested and talked.

Not far away he came upon heaped-up mounds of earth which at first he took to be more graves; but upon closer inspection he discovered stores of corn, buried as had been the basket Barbara found, but with more care; for these were protected from the weather by fine Indian mats.

"There will be less grumbling when next we set out," he said to Bradford, showing him the grain.

"Aye, that there will," his companion agreed, "but we can only take them a sample. The men cannot carry much, weighted down as they are with their armor."

"They can fill the kettle," Standish answered, "and when it is needed we can return for more."

This was done and upon the return of the party the Pilgrims were greatly elated and pleased at the success of the expedition they had thought so lightly of.

"Never have I seen such before," Master Carver said. "Look at the size of the ears and the divers rich colors. Some red, some blue and some yellow! Is it not a special providence that here we have seed suitable to the land to plant next year?"

"Throughout our fearsome voyage the Lord hath ever had a care over us," Elder Brewster remarked piously. "Who among us hath forgotten the case of the seaman who, being cocked up with pride, told

some of those who suffered with seasickness that he hoped to see half of our party thrown overboard. Whereupon, his curses lighting on his own head, was not he himself stricken to his death?"

"Aye," nodded Master Carver in agreement, "even his fellows noted that this was the just hand of God upon him."

"Nor forget," William Bradford put in, "the miraculous case of John Howland. Being washed off the ship in seas that brake above the gratings, he yet seized upon the topsail halliards which hung overboard running at length, and was vouchsafed the strength to cling to them until he was pulled back to the vessel with a boathook. 'T is my belief that this young man is designed for some great service among us. Surely his deliverance from the maw of such a sea is scarce a whit less wonderful than Jonah's deliverance from the jaws of the whale."

Every eye being thus turned toward John Howland, a clerk to Master Carver, the young man got very hot and red and wished he might hide somewhere out of sight until his wonderful destiny overtook him.

"We need not fear," said Master Carver, "the Lord's mercy is ever upon us, and indeed this grain is a signal instance of it."

There could be no doubt that the discovery of the corn came at a time when all the company needed heartening. Their shallop, which they had thought to set quickly to rights, took so much repairing, and the carpenters made such slow work of it, that sixteen or

seventeen days passed before it was ready. Snow had come and the expeditions sent out thereafter must surely have missed the grain by reason of this covering. No place had yet been found for their settlement. In view of the inclement weather and the Indians who had been seen, the women had scarcely set foot on the beach although, yielding to their urgent requests, they had been allowed to wash their linen ashore under guard, the first Monday after their arrival, this being the first of many New England wash-days.

In view of these circumstances the improvement Barbara had hoped for in Rose's condition failed to show itself. Nor was she the only one who was ill. Jasper More, a little lad, who had been joined to the Carver party, was very low and so was Mary Chilton's father. Scurvy had broken out among the company and many of the men who had reached the shore drenched with spray that shortly froze their clothing as stiff as coats of mail had contracted the seeds of the disease that would cause their death.

Myles Standish alone of them all seemed as if made of tempered steel. He returned from the most exhausting labors apparently as fresh as when he went out, and he was ever ready with a cheery word for each and every one. There were many grumblers. Some of those appointed by the London company, who had not come for conscience's sake, found plenty to complain about and were inclined to deny all authority, protesting that in view of the fact that they had come to anchor in New England, instead of within the limits

of their grant in North Virginia, they need no longer observe the covenant upon which they had set their seal.

There was no one of these who would have dared to defy Myles Standish. He usually acted as captain and military leader of the company, and there was none among them who was not ready to acknowledge that he was the right man for the place.

The failing health of the party as a whole made it imperative that their abiding place should be determined. There was little use in waiting for better weather at the outset of winter, so that at last Standish, Brewster, and the other leaders would countenance no more delay, although the winds were so high and cold that the driven spray threatened to turn them into men of ice whenever they took to the small boats.

Two parties set out, one to search inland, the other in the shallop and long-boat to follow the coast, and for three days they explored without finding any hopeful position.

Once as they knelt at prayer they were attacked by savages but no harm resulted, and at the end of this period Master Carver and some of the weaker members of the party verging on collapse, it was thought safer for the long-boat, under command of Master Jonas, to return to the ship while Standish and the others pressed on to examine a harbor that Robert Coppin, the pilot, assured them had every natural advantage they hoped for.

Their enthusiasm running high they set out, to be

shortly overtaken by a storm of snow and sleet. In the tumult of the wind and waters their rudder was broken, the mast split into three pieces and the sail blown overboard. For a time their situation was most perilous, indeed Master Coppin completely lost his wits and, in his mad desire to find shelter, would have wrecked the boat in a cove full of breakers had not a common sailor saved them.

"About with her!" this man cried, springing to the tiller. "About with her or we are cast away!"

Under this seaman's direction they at last found a refuge beneath a little rise of land which protected them from the gale. They went ashore and, though it was night and they knew not whether savages were near, they risked lighting a fire to warm and dry themselves.

In the morning they found themselves on a small island at the entrance to a harbor and spent that day in making the necessary repairs and resting. The next day was the Sabbath and they kept it sacred, notwithstanding the great need for haste; but on Monday, December the eleventh, as then reckoned, the day of the winter solstice, somewhat rested and in better spirits they left their island and made for the mainland.

At last they had reached their journey's end, for here they discovered tillable soil, fresh water and a hill capable of fortification.

"'T is here we shall set our colony!" Standish declared, and without delay they sailed back across the

bay to the *Mayflower* to carry the glad tidings that at length they had found their proper home.

The news that met them on their return was mingled good and bad. William Bradford's wife had died by drowning, but to offset this sad accident, the first white baby that could claim New England as its birthplace had seen the light of day on the *Mayflower* in harbor and was named Peregrine, in commemoration of the wanderings of the Pilgrims.

No time was lost in starting for their chosen abode, which they agreed to call New Plymouth in remembrance of the last place that had showed them hospitality in their mother country; but which, strangely enough, had already received that same name from Captain John Smith.

On December fifteenth, the *Mayflower* weighed anchor, and Barbara, standing at the side, looked back at the shore which had grown so familiar to her that its aspect had taken on something almost homelike.

For Rose's sake, above everything else, she would be glad to reach their destination. She was building great hopes upon getting her friend to land, and indeed Captain Standish had promised that, the harbor being so well sheltered, they should early have their wish.

So, with a fair wind, the *Mayflower* sailed across the bay, only to be forced to bear up again when within two leagues of the harbor. This disappointment proved too much for Rose. She broke down utterly, sobbing like a child.

"I shall not live to set foot upon this Promised

Land," she wailed. "'T is my belief that I am the cause of all your ill-luck. If you would but cast me into the sea —"

"Like Jonah?" cried Myles, intent upon making light of her fears. "Faith, Jonah is the name on every lip throughout this company. For my part I venture to prophesy that thou wilt flourish like Jonah's gourd, once thou settest foot on land."

He was called away as he was finished speaking, and Rose turned a pale face to Barbara.

"'T is an ill-omened prophecy," she said sadly; "for Jonah's gourd withered and died."

For a moment Barbara had no answer ready, and when she spoke with a forced laugh, she had a lump in her throat that threatened to choke her.

"Captain Standish is a soldier and no prophet. Now I, Barbara Gorges, shall prophesy. My prediction is that tomorrow and no later you shall set foot upon the Promised Land."

Rose brightened like a child at the anticipation.

"'T is a good promise and I will sleep on it," she said happily.

But after Barbara had tucked her up, the girl went in search of Myles.

"Will we reach land tomorrow?" she asked him abruptly.

Standish shook his head doubtfully.

"We 're not blown off so far but that we should make it," he said, "but we seem to be the sport of the winds. Why do you ask me?"

"Because," Barbara's tone was grave, "Rose is in such a state of mind that I fear for the consequences if we do not soon get her off this vessel. An the *Mayflower* cannot make the harbor, I verily believe that it will be less dangerous to her life to put her on board the shallop and pay some among the sailors to row us to the land than to disappoint her again."

Standish started. The warning the girl meant to convey was not lost upon him.

"In truth, Barbara, you find me in a quandary. I know not which way to turn for worriment. Before ever we left England we heard of a pestilence which had swept this region of the world, destroying the Indians. For my part I think there was some truth in the story, as otherwise we should have seen more savages than we have. So far the parties we have met have been few in numbers; but so are we —"

"Then you 've seen Indians? You never told us," Barbara interrupted.

"Aye, we 've seen them," he acknowledged with a boyish grin, "but there was no occasion for alarming you and Rose needlessly. You 're a timid pair."

"And with good cause, if hosts of savages infest the shore," Barbara murmured.

"Nay, 't is that point I wish to bring out," Myles explained. "I judge there are no vast numbers of Indians near; yet there are some. They were around us one night, howling like wolves; but, like wolves, they were easily frightened off by the discharge of a musket."

"Indeed I like not the sound of a musket in my own ears," Barbara protested. "I am not without sympathy for these poor creatures."

"Aye, but they returned next day," Myles went on with a smile. "We drove them off again and followed after for a space to show we feared them not."

"Are they then a cowardly people?" the girl asked.

"Nay, not cowardly," Standish returned. "Rather do I think them brave, but strange to fire arms. One painted fellow hid behind a tree and loosed three arrows at us, until I fired and splintered the bark about his ears. I hope in time to make friends with them. 'T is rather their fear of us than natural savagery that makes them dangerous; but until their confidence has been won, we must live within a stockade — and it is yet to build."

"Still do I think 't is best to run all risks and take Rose ashore," Barbara persisted, though her own blood seemed to turn to ice at the thought of being within reach of the wild men.

"Nay, how can it be done?" Myles argued.

"I know not," Barbara went on earnestly. "But I think we should brave any danger. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' as you know, and I greatly fear for Rose."

"Is it then so bad?" asked Myles.

"Indeed it can scarce be worse," Barbara insisted. "She has reached the limit of her endurance. Then, too, there is the scurvy and this new fever to fear. Rose hath little strength to stand an added tax."

"Aye on that account I would gladly see her in the clean winds of the shore," said Standish. "She knows not of the illness aboard?" he asked anxiously.

"Not yet, but I cannot promise to keep the knowledge from her long," Barbara replied. "I fear the day when it cannot be hid."

"Between the fever upon the ship and the savages upon the shore I am at my wits' end what to do," Myles declared sorrowfully.

"Then take her to the land," Barbara pleaded. "Once her feet are set on firm ground again; once she sees that despite her doubts she has won safely through, it may be that she will regain her health and spirits. Now she is at the end of her tether. She hath so set her heart upon landing that I fear she might not survive another disappointment."

"Something shall be arranged," said Myles, after a moment's thoughtfulness. "You are right, I think. I can build a hut for her; but there is no reason for you to share such peril."

"Nay, you know I shall never leave Rose," Barbara declared with a full heart. "Have a hut built for me, too, else will I lie outside her threshold like a faithful dog."

"Thou art a good friend, Bab!" Standish cried, seizing the girl's hand and wringing it with ill-concealed emotion. "In truth I know not what I should have done without thee to watch over her, for I have a multitude of duties that I may not shirk."

"Then you will make some arrangement for us to

go ashore?" Barbara was overjoyed at the success of her mission. She had feared to find it difficult to persuade Captain Standish.

"You shall both go in the first boat," he assured her, and turned away with a short "Good-night."

CHAPTER XI

THE GENERAL SICKNESS

THE next day broke clear and beautiful and, the wind favoring the enterprise, there was no further difficulty in making the harbor.

As the *Mayflower's* anchor chains rang out, eyes were blinded by tears and many dropped to their knees to praise the Lord their God.

True to his promise Myles had arranged that Rose, with Barbara to wait upon her, should go ashore in the first boat.

Mistress Standish was in a fever of excitement, but so weak that she could not stand or even sit up unsupported, and Myles, full of ill-concealed anxiety, sat with her in the stern, while Barbara, anxious to be as little in the way as possible, curled up in the bow of the shallop.

Had her heart been free from anxiety the girl would have enjoyed this little voyage over the dancing waves of the bay. The air, invigorating and cold without dampness, showed the shores clear cut against a background of deep blue sky and white cloud. To her it was a land to love, and, as the boat touched, she leaped ashore joyously, glowing with life and hope, and stood erect on a great rock, fit emblem, had she but known it, of the young colony soon to take root there.

"Thou art the first ashore, Bab!" cried Rose. "It should be set down in history that thou wert the first settler to land and make thy home here."

Others had disembarked while she spoke; but it was Elder Brewster who reminded them all of their duty.

"Forget not him who hath delivered you from the terrors of the deep," he said, sternly. "Fall upon your knees and bless the God of Heaven without whose help we, in our weakness, dare not hope for success."

Their prayer having been made, Myles Standish established Rose in a sheltered nook.

"It is my plan to build two huts after the Indian fashion, of saplings set in a circle and then bowed over and lashed in arches. These I shall thatch, and hope they can be made snug against wind and weather."

"They will look like great bee-hives," the girl declared, "and Rose shall be the Queen Bee. But as I do not wish to be a drone — what can I do to help?"

"You can tend Rose and cook for us," Standish said, "though I think 't is the plan that some of the matrons shall serve a common table for the workers, when once it is decided where the town is to be built."

"But, while I am at Rose's side my fingers need not be idle," Barbara urged. "Methinks I shall gather reeds and try my hand at weaving mats such as those you found made by the Indians."

"Now that is a most useful inspiration," Standish cried. "I will see that you have the material."

Unfortunately for Barbara, the dried bents brought to her were hard and stiff at this season, and her hands

suffered sorely; but she persisted in the work, believing that the mats would prove invaluable. Rose, too, with thin, white fingers, tried to help her, and the two were happy; for, while no immediate change in Rose's condition could be expected, yet on shore she lost much of the feeling of apprehension which always oppressed her on shipboard.

Priscilla Mullens, arm in arm with little Elizabeth Tilley, who had managed to stow themselves in the next boatload to arrive, marched up to their nook to see Barbara at work.

"Thou wert first ashore, Barbara. I watched thee from the deck," Elizabeth announced. "Mary Chilton is in a fine rage. She and John Alden were each determined to be first."

"What I would ask," said Priscilla, "is why such an honor was thine? Surely some precedency should have been observed, or else we maids should have drawn lots."

"Barbara came to care for me, who am too weak to do aught for myself," Rose interposed, feeling the undercurrent of jealousy in what the girl was saying. "Her landing first was a mere chance, due to her position in the boat. Would you have had her hold her ground for all to stumble over?"

"Nay, you take us too seriously," Priscilla answered abashed, then she went on, wishing to change the subject, "what is the work you do there? You put us to shame, for at the moment there seems naught we can set a hand to."

"We 're weaving mats," said Barbara, sucking a pricked finger. "Thou too hadst best learn the trick of it, for they will prove capable of many uses."

Priscilla, seeing Barbara's scratches, drew back.

"My excuse for being here is that I am to help my mother prepare the mid-day meal," she said. "She would dismiss me if I went to her with such wounds."

Rose, alarmed at this, glanced at Barbara's hands.

"Bab!" she exclaimed sharply, "'t is monstrous that thou shouldst be so torn."

"It looks much worse than it is," Barbara declared. "There 's naught that 's more than skin-deep."

"But why dost thou not soak the reeds to soften them?" Elizabeth Tilley asked timidly. Barbara gazed at the girl with round eyes.

"Because I had not the wit to think of it, my child," she replied, and rose at once to follow the suggestion. Elizabeth went with her to the water's edge and Priscilla slipped to the ground to sit in Barbara's place at Rose's side.

"Barbara Gorges is a right pretty maid," she began. "Dost thou not think so, Mistress Standish?"

"She 's a sweet and kindly child," Rose returned.

"But dost thou not think her pretty?" Priscilla persisted. "Some of the lads were discussing her this morning, and Love Brewster, the Elder's son, vowed it was because she was the fairest maid on the ship that she was sent first to land."

"Love Brewster was doubtless amusing himself at your expense —"

"At my expense!" Priscilla interrupted heatedly. "Nay, how can that be when I agreed with him? 'She 's a thought thin for my taste,' I told him; 'but assuredly she is the pride of the ship, for we have no other golden-haired maid with any claim to beauty.'"

Priscilla's dark eyes were meekly downcast but there was a faint gleam beneath her lashes which boded ill to any who failed to contradict her.

"By great good hap," said Rose sweetly, "for one man at least each maid hath all the beauty of the universe. Perchance my little Barbara is that maid for Love, though I think it not, still holding fast to my belief that he was talking in the hope of drawing you about his ears. But there were others there who would scarce concede Barbara the palm."

"I know not whom thou canst mean," said Priscilla, bridling. Rose smiled wisely to herself, putting her wrappings more snugly about her.

"I mean John Alden for one," she told the girl.

"John Alden!" cried Priscilla, thrown off her guard. "John Alden! The cooper out of Hampton?" She tossed her head disdainfully. "'Twould be monstrous forward of *him* to pass an opinion on one of our company."

"Do not scorn him too much," Rose advised. "My husband holdeth him in high esteem as a very hopeful young man, and, while it will be left to his liking to go or stay, I make no doubt he will join himself to us."

"Haply thou art right, mistress," Priscilla replied, her cheeks noticeably flushed. "Most like he is a

worthy person; but he does not interest me, so I have not observed him."

"Let me commend him to your notice," said Rose, with twinkling eyes. "If Barbara by some few might be accounted the prettiest maid on the *Mayflower,* there would surely be others to dispute the judgment, as I have said; but among the young men there can arise no such question. John Alden is the handsomest of the company."

The two other girls returned at this moment with the soaked reeds.

"Thou must not touch them, Rose, lest they give thee a chill," said Barbara. "I shall lay them on this rock and work as if at a table to avoid damping myself; but thou hast no idea how much easier the work will be and, when once the mats are woven, I have but to hang them in the wind to dry. I have much to thank Elizabeth for."

Priscilla had risen at their approach and now was in haste to be off.

"My mother will be calling to us," she declared, and, after making their manners to Mistress Standish, she and Elizabeth raced away.

"What a pretty girl Priscilla is," said Barbara, in honest admiration. "Quite the prettiest on the ship, I think. And so modest and sweet withal."

"Yes," Rose agreed. "She is as pretty and as playful as a kitten. A white one with green eyes; but my sweeting, forget not that both she and the kitten have claws."

Barbara turned and regarded Rose with well opened eyes.

"I vow I do not always understand thee," she said frankly. "At times thou seemest so young and innocent that I feel like to a nurse with a nursling. Again thou sayest something that hath so many meanings tied up in it that I marvel at thy wisdom. Dost mean now that thou dost not like Priscilla Mullens?"

"I vow," returned Rose, opening her own eyes and mimicking Barbara, "I vow I do not always understand myself. 'T is a secret I make thee a present of, but as to Priscilla Mullens — do I like her or do I not? That is as yet an open question."

Seeing that she was to get no satisfaction, Barbara dropped the subject.

"Our hut is coming on apace," she gossiped. "The people are still of many minds where to set the town, but Captain Standish saith it will be here, and lets them talk on. They plan another exploration for Monday and will then be as far from a decision as ever, he saith. In the end they must settle here, and he plans to build a street of permanent houses on a line with the brook, for conveniency. They will start with two houses and a church."

"We 're lucky not to have to return to the ship as the others must," Rose shuddered at the very thought. "The air here is so clean and pure, while there one was like to smother. I think they knew not how to build the cabins for so long a voyage. In the years to come others will doubtless improve upon our arrangements

and those who cross the main after us will reach these shores in better case than we."

It was with a rather pathetic pride that Myles showed them their quarters for the night.

"Your bower is completed," he said, "and it 's none so bad for this new land. The floor is laid, first with small pebbles from the brook, and then with clean sand, and I have had a trench dug without, so that if it storms thou wilt not be washed away."

"On top of the sand we will set one of my new mats for warmth," Barbara suggested, "and yet another we will hang at the windward side of the bower to keep out drafts." She arranged these as she spoke. "'T is cosier so," she ended.

"The hut is well thatched, but I shall build a fire at the door," Standish told them. "The warmth will be comforting after nightfall." He did not add his thought that it would serve also to keep away wandering wolves. "I sleep nearby and will hear you if you so much as whisper."

"For my part I feel so happy in my new home that I shall not even dream till morning," Rose declared, and in truth their first night in the new land was passed most peacefully and under conditions that were vastly more comfortable in many essential particulars than was the ship.

Life ashore quickly fell into something of a routine. The men worked tirelessly, some on the buildings, while others were told off to go into the woods in search of small game. These met with little success,

and, although on Cap-Codd William Bradford had been caught by the leg in an Indian deer trap made of a bent sapling and they had studied its construction, they seemed to have no skill in setting such traps, or haply, as some thought, the acorns they strewed on the ground were not the same as those baiting the Indian snare. At all events they got no deer at this time.

Christmas was now upon them; but the Pilgrims refused to keep it because the Pope, by edict, had made it a religious festival. They proposed to work all day and, in fact, did so; much to Rose's indignation.

"I 'm no Puritan," she said, shaking her head obstinately, "and this would be enough to keep me from ever being of their congregation. Christmas began before ever there was a Pope, for the most that is claimed for him is that he is the successor to the Apostle Peter, and I shall keep the festival always. It is the most beautiful and the most friendly feast we have."

"I grant thee that," Standish said, "and my mother, being of the church, I dislike not the Catholics; but my dear, while we are not of their congregation here, yet have I pledged myself to give no offence unto my neighbors, who oppose all saints' days and such."

"Nay, Myles," pouted his wife, "I did wrong to allow thee to come with them. Methinks the solemnity of these Separatists is catching."

"Say no more," Myles laughed, "thou shalt have thy Christmas; but, for thy husband's good name, re-

serve thy mirth and cheer till after the workmen have retired to the ship for the night."

This Rose agreed to; but on Christmas night the little party of three gathered in the Bower, as they had decided to call their tiny home. Wassail was brewed and little gifts were exchanged. Moreover, Myles had found a supply of wild nuts that were very good and sweet.

"And," said Rose disrespectfully, "I doubt not high Heaven taketh as much joy in looking down upon our innocent happiness as it doth upon the long faces of the Puritans."

"You forget that Barbara is a Puritan?" Myles laughed mischievously, whereat the girl flushed. She had been guiltily conscious of her enjoyment of their festivity and had inwardly taxed herself with laxness; although, had she but known it, aboard the *Mayflower* none of the Pilgrims scorned the beer Master Jonas offered them in honor of the day.

"Barbara is no proper Puritan," Rose declared, joyously. "Her mouth turns up, *so,* instead of down, *so.* If I am spared, she will have forgotten to so much as *spell* the word ten years from now."

But, alas, Rose's playful speech would have been looked upon by the Pilgrims much as they looked upon the sailor's curse; for she was not fated to be spared.

The dreaded ship's fever had taken a firm hold upon the company. To check its ravages it was thought best to bring the victims ashore and put them in the

partially finished houses. Here they died so rapidly that from day to day the survivors hardly knew who remained to them and, when they dug the grave for a new victim, they carefully leveled off the earth, lest the Indians, whom they felt to be ever waiting their chance to descend upon them, should count the graves and guess the diminution of their numbers.

Richard Britteridge was the first to be buried at Plymouth, but others soon followed him, and among those was Rose Standish.

Standing by her grave together Barbara and Myles both felt for the moment that there was nothing left to live for; then Myles straightened up, as if once more lifting his burden to his shoulders.

"Come, little sister," he said, "there are others almost as ill as she was. We must do our best for them, too."

So they struggled on, with never an instant to think of themselves. Once in a while they were whipped to indignation by some selfishness, as when the master of the *Mayflower* replying to a request for a small can of beer for a man who was desperately ill and fancied that water failed to quench his thirst, said, "If it was my own father he should have none," fearing that he himself might be deprived upon the homeward journey.

But more often they were stirred to admiration, as when, after this, many of the ship's crew being taken down, the Pilgrims still on the vessel assumed charge of them and nursed them as tenderly as they did their own people.

Master Jonas, thinking his sailors' seizure was another direct judgment for hardness of heart, volunteered to supply beer to the ailing even though he himself sailed back to England with naught stronger than water in his casks.

Still the number of those stricken grew until, at one awful moment, there remained but seven people able to stand upon their feet and take upon themselves the labor of preparing food, washing clothing, nursing the sick and burying the dead.

Of these seven Elder Brewster, Myles Standish and Barbara were three. They never spared themselves. they never shirked a task however loathsome. They risked infection every minute, yet they escaped.

One evening when the two last named faced each other after a day which had seen no new case and no death, Barbara looked at Myles and smiled, with lips that seemed to have lost the trick of it.

"You think we are through the worst?" he asked.

Barbara nodded. Her heart was too full for speech.

"Thank God," Myles said, and turned away, his lips trembling under his mustachios.

CHAPTER XII

JOHN ALDEN AND PRISCILLA

EVEN before the time when the coming of spring and the slackening of mortality had brought new hope to Barbara and Myles Standish, many things had happened.

The smoke of Indian fires was often visible against the pale, wintry skies and alarms of attacks were not infrequent. The firing of the thatch of the common-house, where many lay ill, was at once attributed to the savages, but Barbara, who was there at the time on an errand of mercy, was spared such alarm, for she saw a spark from their own fire fall upon it and set it ablaze.

"In truth," she said that evening, speaking to Standish, "I 'm fast coming to your conclusion that these Indians are harmless people who mean us no ill."

Standish suppressed a smile, thinking that the pupil was outstripping the master. He had never expressed just that opinion and, indeed, was persuaded that they must yet come to grips with the Indians and convince them that the whites were not to be trifled with, before the settlement could come to an assured peace. But he had no intention of raising this question in Barbara's mind, so he held silent then and later; although

when in the forest, either hunting or felling timber for building, he ever had an uneasy consciousness that watchful eyes were upon him.

In truth it was with intent to impress those who thus spied upon them, that once, upon a hunting expedition, he shot and killed an eagle on the wing. As the bird crashed to earth he was aware that the silent watchers had fled in terror. When he had fired, he had had no thought of using the eagle for food; but all day he had found naught else, cold weather having driven small animals into their lairs and most birds having migrated to the southward; so now he picked the great fowl up and carried it back with him to the settlement, where they were surprised to find the meat quite tender and not unlike mutton.

Whenever he could make the opportunity Standish went into the forest, hoping to open communication with the Indians. On Cap-Codd they had seen savages from a distance. On their earlier expeditions they had been attacked, and on another occasion had watched a band of ten Indians stripping three grampuses of their blubber; but since their establishment at Plymouth no savages had ventured into the open near them.

It was the uneasy consciousness that they were constantly followed that made such men as Winslow, Bradford and Standish wish to come to grips with the savages rather than to wait supinely until the red men had prepared their plans and perhaps descended upon the settlement in force.

One afternoon, some time before Rose's death, Bar-

bara and Desire Minter, another member of the Carver party, were at the brook washing out linen for the use of the sick when John Goodman's spaniel ran up and cowered at Barbara's feet. He was shortly followed by his master, quite red in the face and blown from running.

"What 's wrong now?" Desire Minter demanded tartly. "Hast been chasing another deer?"

Goodman laughed rather ruefully at this suggestion, for the reference was to an excursion that he and Peter Brown had made a few days before when they had lost themselves following their dogs after a deer and had been out all night, to be met with scant sympathy on their return, by reason of the alarm they had thrown the community into, lest, at last, some of its number had fallen victims to the savages.

"Nay," said Goodman a trifle sheepishly, "I 've seen no deer; but something worse set me to stirring my legs."

"Didst meet an Indian?" asked Barbara.

"Not I," said Goodman, "I do not believe there are any around these parts. Today I 've found out what it is that is watching us in the woods. For my work I 'll stay at home henceforth and stir the pot."

"'T would be burnt broth we 'd sup thereafter," Desire scoffed.

"What was it thou sawest that was so fearsome?" Barbara asked, resisting her inclination to cast anxious glances over her shoulder.

"'T was thus it befell," Goodman began. "I went

but to the edge of the spinney after firewood. Of a sudden my spaniel there almost threw me off my feet, running between my legs for protection. I lifted my stick to beat him off for a nuisance — and there were two great gray wolves who had chased him to me!"

"Wherefore didst thou not shoot them?" demanded Desire practically.

"Shoot them; And me without e'en so much as an axe or a mattock to defend myself withal? I threw the stick I held at the foremost, and they withdrew a pace or two and sat on their tails, grinning at me."

"And then what next?" Barbara was intensely interested, for Myles had ever had a care to keep all the adventures of the men in the wilds from his family, fearing lest their nervousness should grow apace.

"Naught," acknowledged Goodman. "They stared with great green, blazing eyes, and I stared back, for I was too dismayed to take to flight; and at last they left me. But I am sure in my own mind that 'tis they that follow us through the woods."

Although soon after this Master Hopkins and Captain Standish met two Indians who made signs to them, but fled when the white men crossed the brook to meet them, there were many who were pleased to take Goodman's view of the matter.

Master Jonas of the *Mayflower,* feeling his authority slipping from his grasp as more and more of the company were quartered on shore, strongly supported the contention that the savages of that section had all died some years before and scoffed at the or-

der that those going into the woods should go armed.

He came in one day with five fine geese and some venison collops.

"'T is as I told ye," he announced truculently, while displaying his game with pride. "Captain Standish is over-cautious. I say naught against his leadership, for when I am gone you must depend upon someone; but an ye send to England for some stout steel traps you will soon be rid of your 'Indians.' I found a deer, with the wolf that brought it down tearing at its throat. I shot at the beast and scared it off and brought in all that I could carry of the meat; but there is more there if you make haste and transport it here ere night falls."

Meat was scarce and two men set off at once to bring in the venison. They secured it, but returned hot-foot to sound the alarm of an Indian attack.

"'T was killed by savages not by wolves," they panted. "The shaft of the broken arrow lay beside it and the horns had been shorn off close to the skull. Captain Standish is right. 'T is the red men who are ever at our elbow. We heard great hosts of them marching through the forest but now."

Standish and Francis Cooke had hurried in from their felling of timber at the sounding of the alarm and, if further proof of the presence of the savages were needed, they received it on their return to the forest. The tools which they had left behind them in their haste were gone.

"No wolves took our good adz and hatchets," said

Standish, and even the doubters were forced to agree with him.

The menace of the Indians being thus brought home to the leaders of the company, it was agreed that the sooner their cannon were mounted on the top of the hill the better for the safety of the settlement. And it was thought desirable to appoint a military commander that there might be no division of authority in case of attack. Some weeks later, therefore, for in all things the Puritans moved deliberately, a council was called to determine this matter.

Barbara met Myles outside the common-house after the meeting.

"They made you captain," she stated, rather than questioned.

"Now why art thou so sure of that?" Myles demanded, cocking his head on one side.

"You 've been their leader since ever we landed," the girl replied. "It would be ungrateful as well as foolish to set anyone over you."

Standish laughed and then said teasingly:

"'T is their right to make Winslow their captain an he pleaseth them better."

"Why should he please them better?" Barbara demanded, flushing indignantly. "He is not a real soldier like you are. Never will I call him captain! Never! Never!"

"Hey day!" exclaimed Myles, "who would think to find thee such a little spit-fire? Thou wilt not have to call Winslow 'captain,' for they have made me their

leader. I only hope I may prove worthy of their faith — and thine," he added very soberly.

"I doubt not that you will, Captain Standish," Barbara answered gravely, and Myles was driven to smile at her formality.

"I am not 'Captain Standish' to thee, Bab," he said boyishly. "Thou art all the family I have left."

"Are there none in England, then?" Barbara questioned.

"Aye, a high-born lot," he replied gruffly, "who will have none of me."

"I, too, have relatives who are doubtless proud of their titles; but I think them villains," the girl declared with heat.

"And so are mine!" Myles exclaimed angrily. "I am heir apparent by lawful descent to lands in Ormistick Borsconge, Wrightington, Maudsley, Newburrow, Crawston and in the Isle of Man; yet here thou seest me, a soldier of fortune, with my rights surreptitiously detained from me, and little to boast of in this world's goods save a fine sword and the harness I carry on my back. Such as I am," he went on, his voice softening, "I shall be a true brother to thee, Bab, an thou wilt call me Myles, so that I may not feel myself alone on this great continent."

"Is not thy case like to mine?" The girl's thoughts went back to her relatives in England who had stolen her patrimony. "Surely we should be a true brother and sister, Myles." She slipped her hand into his as she spoke and he stooped and kissed it, even while in

his heart he grieved to find it so chapped and work-hardened.

"Now that I 'm their captain," he declared briskly, "I shall countenance no more delay. Tomorrow is the Sabbath; but Monday the work begins. We have still many sick, but, with the aid of such sailors as can stand on their feet, we should manage. When the labor is completed and the pieces mounted so that they will be useful, Governor Carver and I think it but right to offer the sailors such a feast as we can contrive, so I am come to my faithful helper to ask what we can add to the common store."

Barbara knit her brows importantly.

"There 's the mallard you shot today," she suggested.

"Thinkst thou we could spare a little aqua vitæ? We have no beer ashore, as thou well knowest, and the sailors are like to have dry gullets when they have hauled those great pieces to the top of the hill."

"Schnapps is the best they 'll get," the girl answered. "Look you, Myles, we know not when the next ship will come to us, and aqua vitæ we must keep by us against illness."

"That is wise and right," Standish conceded. "Wilt see what women thou canst muster to help thee? The minion and other pieces should all be in position by Wednesday. I am promised a fat goose by Master Jonas, also a crane and a neat's tongue by some of our company."

"Fear not, we shall do very well," cried Barbara.

"There will be a fine feast ready when the work is done."

She and the other girls and women worked untiringly, and when the men returned, elated at the success of their labors, all was ready for them and a bountiful feast was spread.

The young girls were told off to wait upon the tables and there was no lack of whispering and fun among them.

"I vow Master Jonas eateth as if there was no food aboard the *Mayflower*. He 's a valliant trencher man," Humility Cooper giggled to Barbara. "He gave the goose and hath eaten it all save the neck and the feathers."

"Others have helped him," Barbara laughed, "but I grant he has not shirked his share of the work. Mistress Brewster said that, do what she would, it was bound to be a tough morsel."

"Mistress Mullens is the best cook in the company. 'T is too bad she could not oversee the kitchens."

"Her husband lies very ill," Barbara lowered her voice that Priscilla might not hear her. "I could not ask her to leave his side. Indeed I marveled that she sent Priscilla, as I am told that Governor Carver hath gone off to the *Mayflower* to make her father's will."

Humility nodded understandingly, as Priscilla joined them.

"What great secret have you two?" the girl asked, "that you stand whispering here."

"We 're worrying over John Alden," Barbara sug-

gested with twinkling eyes. "In truth, Priscilla, he eateth naught."

"Couldst thou not tempt him with this goose-neck?" put in Humility, pretending grave anxiety. "I fear he will go into a decline if something is not done to nourish him."

"I 'm not interested in the young man," Priscilla answered loftily. "What matters it to me whether he scrapeth his platter or no?"

"Naught! Naught!" replied Barbara promptly. "That is — naught for Priscilla Mullen's sake,— but for the good of the community, which greatly desireth that this commendable young man join himself to it, I think thou shouldst take a kindly interest in his sad case. We 've all coaxed him with the choicest morsels; but he will have none of them. It 's clearly thy duty to present him with this nourishing goose-neck to keep him alive withal."

"Why should I dance attendance upon John Alden?" pouted Priscilla. "I can't abide him — with his red hair!"

"The more charity then, in having a care for his needs," suggested Humility gravely, pressing the platter with the goose-neck into her hands. And thus laden Priscilla had no alternative but to present it to John Alden who, in truth, was seated at the table before an empty pewter plate with an expression on his handsome face little suited to so festive an occasion.

"Will you have some goose?" Priscilla asked, her nose in the air, not condescending to look at the per-

sonable young man to whom she was tendering the platter.

"She treats him as she might a swineherd," said Humility, a hint of indignation in her voice. "Are not men strangely foolish? There is Desire Minter, who would gladly do for him all that a maidenly maid may do, and John Alden scarce knoweth that she liveth, while Priscilla who scorneth him, he sighs for till he 's the laughing-stock of all us girls."

"Will he take the goose-neck?" Barbara craned her own neck to see.

"Will he take it!" Humility's tone was contemptuous. "Aye, and eat it, since she brought it to him. I doubt not that he is so beside himself with joy that he is in danger of swallowing bones and all."

True to her prophecy John Alden was looking up at Priscilla's averted face with his devotion shining from his eyes.

"You saw that I had naught and brought me this?" he murmured. "You 're as kind as you are —"

"I was sent with it!" Priscilla interrupted his compliment. "Will you have it or no? The girls are waiting for me to return with the platter."

Thus reminded, and with his spirits somewhat damped, John Alden scooped up the goose-neck and murmured his thanks; whereupon Priscilla, her nose still in the air, sailed back to the giggling girls.

"I trust you now find yourselves content," she snapped. "Your precious John Alden is fed."

"So I see," said Barbara gravely, "but would it

greatly burden thee, if I asked thee to go inquire why he would not take a fine piece of breast I proffered him? It scarce seems possible that he thought I 'd poisoned it; yet why should he refuse it and accept a scrawny neck? That point troubleth me sorely."

"Haply he hath a liking for necks," Mary Chilton suggested, she having been an amused spectator of Priscilla's progress.

"His tastes or his distastes are naught to me," Priscilla averred. "I cannot see why you all raise such a pother over John Alden. To me he seemeth a very ordinary young man."

"He 's more than ordinary good to look at," declared Humility. "He 's quite the handsomest man in all this company. Dost not think so, Priscilla?"

"I 've never wasted a thought on his appearance," Priscilla vowed, "nor do I think my mother would consider time well spent that was given over to such idle discussions."

Her remark served in a measure to put the other girls out of countenance, but Mary plucked up spirit to say:

"Thy mother herself remarked what a good face the young man hath."

"And thou thinkest him the most personable young man here, dost thou not, Barbara?" Humility Cooper stated, determined not to be put down by Priscilla Mullens.

Barbara turned an innocent and surprised face to the others.

"Nay," she said positively, "most assuredly I think naught of the sort. To me my guardian is ever the goodliest man in any company."

Priscilla Mullens moved aside at these words until she had an unobstructed view of the head of the table where Myles Standish sat in one of the seats of honor.

"Captain Standish!" she exclaimed in a curious tone, as if she had never before set eyes upon him. "Barbara is right! Captain Standish is the most distinguished man in all this plantation."

CHAPTER XIII

BARBARA UNCOVERETH A PLOT

"MASTER JONAS is earnest to take his departure," said Standish abruptly to Barbara one morning.

"Myles," the girl spoke thoughtfully, "I mistrust that man. He hath shown a great lack of good will in our enterprises from the first, when he refused to cruise the bay for lack of a chart although Captain John Smith had already explored it and Coppin, the pilot, knew the way of it."

"None the less," Standish declared, "I 'm not minded to have him go now, even though we must buy his forbearance. The stockade is not completed. We have many who are not recovered from the general sickness —"

"So hath Master Jonas," Barbara interrupted. "I gravely doubt if his men have the strength to put to sea an he commandeth their departure."

"'T is possible that such threats are but a part of his plan to thrust his hand into our purse once more," Standish returned. "I would I knew the exact conditions aboard the *Mayflower*. An he cannot make good his proposal to sail away and leave us in the lurch, he may whistle for more money."

"I 'll discover how things are aboard," Barbara volunteered. "Although our own party are now housed on land we have never given over care of the sick on the vessel. It will be a simple matter to go out with a small supply of broth or juice of lemons and make sure how the invalids progress."

"Canst do that, Bab?" Standish asked anxiously. "With that knowledge in hand I will know how to govern my language with Master Jonas."

That forenoon therefore in pursuance of her plan, Barbara once more set foot on board the *Mayflower* which she had thought to have left forever.

It was a springlike day, and under her direction most of the invalids were soon basking in the warmth of the sun. Grateful to her for her attentions, the men were ready enough to chat, and she soon discovered that the master's plan to put to sea was at last feasible. They would be short-handed; but, at a pinch, there were now men enough to work the vessel and Master Jonas could be depended upon to drive them to their tasks without mercy once they were able to stand upon their feet.

This might not, in the circumstances, be the most welcome news to Myles, but she could not in her heart find herself sorry for any sign that the fever was abating.

"Right glad am I to see so many on the mend," the girl said heartily to an old seaman, who raised his hollow eyes to hers with dumb gratitude, like an animal whose wounds had been tended.

"Of a certainty we owe our lives to you and yours, missy," he managed to say, "such of us as won through."

"And 't is a shame the way the master hath befooled you from the very beginning," another put in. "I 'll not say but that the *Speedwell* gave ye honester treatment, although I took my piece of Dutch gold with the others."

"Silence, man!" the old seaman muttered. "Dost want to be triced up by the thumbs in thy present state?"

But too much had been said for Barbara to allow herself to be put off. Under threat of going to the master and demanding the truth, she forced the men to tell what they knew and then prepared at once to start for shore with her astounding story.

"Our blood will be on your head," the old sailor told her, weak tears coursing down his lined cheeks, "an ye let it escape ye where ye came by this knowledge."

"You need fear naught," the girl assured him. "It is not my intention to make this news public; but Master Jonas plans to leave us defenseless, and one way or another we mean to detain him here until our leaders think we are safe."

"'T is no more than fair and just," the younger sailor agreed. "We 've brought you into this peril, you have cared for us in our weakness. We should not abandon you. For my part I fear naught, for I know myself to be safe in your hands."

Barbara had herself rowed ashore and no sooner was she landed than she sought out Myles.

"I have news for thy ear alone," she told him meaningly, and he straightway managed to leave his work and go to her.

"I have discovered an infamous conspiracy!" she cried with flashing eyes, "but I am pledged to protect the poor puppets who gave me the tale."

"Get on with thy recital," Myles said, signifying his agreement.

"The ship will be short-handed, but it is in Master Jonas' power to set sail," she told him first. "However, I think you can prevent it if you hold over him the threat of disclosing to our company how he hath plotted against them.

"The *Speedwell's* master and crew counterfeited leaks and never crossed the ocean. Master Jonas brought us to these shores, but, once here, he took us among the shoals; in order that our courage might melt and, believing that the prevailing winds were contrary, we might give over our attempt to reach our grant in North Virginia."

"But wherefore, wherefore?" demanded Myles. "He saved himself but a small part of the great journey thereby, and he 's no craven like the *Speedwell's* captain."

"Nevertheless he and Master Reinolds had but the one motive," Barbara declared. "A shameful one! More shameful even than the cowardice of which we accused the *Speedwell's* crew."

"Now what mean ye?" Myles asked. "Cease to speak in riddles and out with your story."

"They are one and all in the pay of the Dutch!" Barbara declared. "I myself can scarce credit it; but it is none the less the truth. The Lowlanders had no mind to see their trading settlement on Hudson's River cramped for room, so they offered to pay both Master Reinolds and Master Jonas, as well as their crews, to arrange that we never reach that haven of plenty."

Standish sprang to his feet in anger, the logic in her conclusions at once going home to his mind.

"The treacherous hounds!" he exclaimed. "To take our money and play us false. But no," he went on after a moment's consideration, "I think we wrong Master Jonas. The *Speedwell,* I grant you, was engaged in Holland and may have been tampered with after this fashion; but the *Mayflower* started from London, so that the shrewd Dutchmen lacked the chance to bribe her crew."

"Dost remember the *Neeltje* that came so opportunely into the harbor at Plymouth to take me back to Delfes Haven?" Barbara asked equably.

Myles Standish slapped his thigh.

"You think she was sent to suborn the men?" he demanded. "By Heaven, Master Jonas shall find himself cut off —."

Barbara's hand on his arm stayed him and he subsided again into his seat.

"Give not way to anger, Myles," she said, "naught must happen to this man. See you not that we are de-

pendent for years to come on the good will of such ships as sail to this port? The *Neeltje* was to have caught us up at Dartmouth where it had been planned by the conspirators or ever we set sail from the Low Lands, that the *Speedwell* should put in to be searched and mended. But the *Neeltje* was delayed, and as Plymouth was to be the next port of call in their dishonest plan, they came there straightway to bribe captain and crew, one or both, of the *Speedwell's* consort.

"And they succeeded?" asked Myles, through clenched teeth.

"They succeeded, as you know," Barbara answered.

"I'm no sailor," Standish said slowly, "but, at the time, I could see no reason why we should be driven on the shoals at 'Tucker's Terrour.'—And now what is the best use we can make of this knowledge?"

He knit his brows and sat plunged in meditation, turning the conditions over and over in his mind and coming to no satisfactory conclusion.

"Myles," Barbara at last broke in upon his musings, "may I put before you my thoughts upon this matter, for it is needful that you act at once, as Master Jonas is making secret preparation for departure and we may awaken some fair morning to find that the *Mayflower* hath already sailed."

"Speak on," Standish urged, "haply thou mayst clear my brain for me. At present it is like a magic maze, with neither beginning nor end to it."

"It seemeth to me," Barbara said, "that to keep this man's good will, (for it will profit us little to have him

return across the main to warn other mariners against making this a port of call,) to keep his good will, then, we should make sacrifice of our pride if needful and, working upon his cupidity which evidently is great, we should pay him somewhat to remain here until you are willing to see him depart."

"Pay him!" shouted Standish. "Faith, I'll —"

"You will keep faith with the men who trusted me," suggested Barbara gently.

"To be sure! To be sure!" Standish agreed, "but I must also keep faith with those who put their trust in me. Suppose the man cometh not to my terms and saileth away despite me?"

"He must lack the chance," Barbara answered promptly. "Have him ashore here for the consultation; then, if he doth not meet you fairly and squarely, you can reveal what you know and point out to him that you have but to declare his guilt to the others in authority to cause him to be seized, his case heard and judgment pronounced upon him."

"The plan seemeth sound so far," Standish conceded. "I foretell that he will come to terms; but, having given his word to stay, how can I prevent his sailing unbeknown to me?"

"That point was my greatest puzzlement," Barbara acknowledged. "I thought of taking hostages from the ship till it was rendered helpless, but that would declare to the whole company that there was something awry; and, Myles, so many lives have been lost here in the cold and wet that I fear the people's just ven-

geance if they learn that they were purposely led astray."

"What then is the alternative?" asked Standish. "I vow I can see no way to hold a man to his word who hath not honor enough to hold himself to it."

"In this case there is a way," Barbara said. "You must prepare a writing acknowledging his part in this plot and make him sign it for present immunity, promising on your part to give him some small remuneration for his services and to return him this incriminating document on the day he sets sail if he hath faithfully kept to his agreement with you."

Standish looked at the girl with honest admiration. "Barbara, thou tellst me thou art fourteen —"

"Nay then," Barbara returned bristling. "A maid's age doth not stand still. I 've turned fifteen since last we mentioned it."

"And even that," Standish interrupted, "lacks somewhat of being venerable as thou wilt acknowledge; yet here is a plan as sound as any gray beard could propound with every point considered and no loophole left for failure."

"You like it then, Myles?" Barbara smiled, happy at his praise.

"So well do I like it that I shall waste no time in acting upon it," he told her, and left her forthwith to set his plans in motion.

Barbara, going about her business for the common good, soon found herself working beside Desire Minter.

"She'll take him, be he cooper or captain"

"Hast heard that John Alden hath come down with the sickness?" the young woman asked.

"Nay," said Barbara, "that 's news to me and bad news at that. The young man seemeth so well behaved and gentle, for all Priscilla flouts him, that I entertain a real friendship for him."

"There be those who say she will go through the woods to take up with a crooked stick at last," averred Desire with a hint of rancor in her tones.

"She 's but a child," said Barbara, "scarce more than a year or two older than I. My thoughts are not turned to such matters, so why should hers be?"

"That year or two makes all the difference, but Priscilla is not like thee. Desire spoke shortly, with a hint of affection for Barbara in her hard eyes. "'T is not so much that she findeth John Alden not to her taste as that she is ambitious. She hath set her mind far above his humble station."

"Now what meanest thou?" asked Barbara. "We be all equals in the sight of the Lord."

"No cooper, at all events, is counted good enough for Priscilla," sneered Desire, "although a C standeth for him she hath determined on."

"John Crackstone is too young. Priscilla would scorn him as but a lad. John Cooke is younger still," the girl was guessing now, hunting for the answer to the puzzle, but Desire shook her head and toiled on in silence.

"Then I know not who it can be," Barbara declared resignedly, "but this I tell thee, Desire, for all her

airish ways Priscilla's heart is in the right place and some day, when she findeth her mate, she 'll take him, be he cooper or captain."

"And now thou hast said it," retorted the young woman, while Barbara stopped her work and looked at her in open amazement.

CHAPTER XIV

BARBARA SOUNDETH AN ALARM

OF course it was plain to Barbara that Desire meant to hint that Priscilla had set her heart upon winning Captain Standish, and she burst into a merry laugh at the absurdity of the idea.

"'T is scarce kind of us to talk lightly of Priscilla, who is so lately orphaned, but in truth, Desire, thou dost an injustice to the girl. She looks up to Myles as she doth to Elder Brewster and Governor Carver."

"Have it thy own way," Desire interrupted, "'t is naught to me." And she gathered up the clothing she was sewing on and moved off.

Barbara looked after her friend's rather ungainly form with pity in her eyes. It was common gossip in the community that Desire had bestowed her heart unasked on tall, handsome John Alden, who gave never a thought to the homely maid, having eyes for none save pretty Priscilla.

"It passeth my comprehension," she mused, "but seemingly a maid, having set her mind upon one who misliketh her, can thereafter see no good in the fair who taketh her loved one's fancy. It would appear more reasonable that, trusting in his judgment, Desire, too, should proclaim Priscilla a paragon. But no, it worketh not after that fashion. She can see no good

at all in Priscilla, who seeth no good in John, and whom I declare to be as sweet and kindly a maid as one would meet in a day's journey. In Europe not here," she added in afterthought.

That evening Myles told her of his interview with Master Jonas.

"He 's a mean scoundrel," he declared, seating himself.

"I never liked the man," Barbara confessed.

"Nor I, yet did I not think him such a low varlet," Myles went on. "I charged him roundly with his crime against us and at first he would have blustered it out, but when I showed him that I held him twixt thumb and finger he grew meek and cringed."

"Aye, 't is a coward's way," Barbara commented.

"'T is all as thou saidst," Myles continued. "I make no doubt of that, and yet — and yet — I could have sworn he looked relieved when he learned what it was I knew."

"He looked relieved?" Barbara repeated questioningly.

"Aye, 't was passing strange," Standish mused. "Can it be that there is afoot some deeper villainy than we have fathomed?"

"But did the man not confess?" Barbara asked.

"Oh, he confessed that he had trafficked with the Dutch," Myles told her. "It seems they were willing enough to have us under their government; but that we refused. The Pilgrims would not renounce the land of their birth, and it ill-suited the Hollanders to

have an English Colony so near to the disputed land on Hudson's River."

"We can scarce blame them for that," Barbara remarked.

"Aye, there I agree," Myles said. "When we in this new Plymouth have carved a home out of the wilderness I shall not be ready to give it up to anyone who comes with a mere paper claim."

"Yet we meant not to disturb the Dutch in their possessions," Barbara protested.

Myles dismissed the matter with his usual shrug.

"They determined to run no risks," he declared, "but I would that they had selected a kindlier shore for our abiding place."

"Oh, 't is beautiful here," Barbara exclaimed, "and spring is on the wing. Already I have seen strange birds. Today one hopped upon a bush at my side, as blue as any jewel."

"Aye," agreed Myles, "others have observed the birds. They insisted today upon putting in some of the garden seeds. I am persuaded that it is too early, but naught could stop them."

"We have not so great a store that we can afford to waste any," Barbara said, with knitted brows.

"The harm is done," Myles answered. "We will hope for the best, but to my mind it is so important to know the right time for planting that I suggested a voyage in the shallop, even as far as Cap-Codd, to see whether the Indian gardens we noted there showed any signs of working."

"'T would be of good use," the girl agreed thoughtfully. "When do you start?"

"Not at all," Standish replied. "It was considered too hazardous, while so many are still ill of fever and more coming down. Those of my crew might be stricken."

"Could you not take those who have recovered," the girl suggested.

"I think myself that it would leave the settlement short-handed," Standish said. "The sickness hath not spared the hardiest."

"Except you, Myles. Thank God you have been saved!"

"And you!" Captain Standish showed his white teeth in his boyish grin. "When you name over the lusty ones who escaped, forget not yourself." He looked down laughingly at the girl's slight figure, and Barbara laughed too.

"Oh, I 'm not very stout, that I 'll acknowledge," she said, "but, if the fat were the strongest, good Mistress Carver would be our bravest worker, while as it is she is ever sickly and complaining."

After Rose Standish's death it had been thought better that Barbara should take up her abode with the Carvers. Indeed she felt it a duty to help the poor lady all she could, as she had deprived her of the services of a maid; but she also looked after Standish's small house, supervising carefully all that went on therein.

Some time after this conversation with Myles the

girl was standing in front of the common-house when, to her amazement she saw coming toward her, a painted Indian wearing a fringed girdle of skins. All her old horror of the savages swept over her and she stood speechless and trembling, rooted to the ground by terror. The brave might have slain her in her tracks, had his intentions been evil, and she could not have raised a finger to stop him; but he slipped by her like a shadow. To his thinking the warrior who stopped to parley with a squaw lowered himself to the level of a woman.

Having passed her thus, he was on his way to Standish's house and Barbara's knowledge of that untied her tongue. Standish was within and doubtless unarmed. He must be warned. So, forgetting her own danger, she called.

"To arms, Myles! Indians!"

Standish, tumbling out in haste at this alarm, almost collided with a figure standing with folded arms before his door. He recoiled from the encounter, and a bronzed hand shot out toward him.

"Welcome!" the savage ejaculated.

The accent might be curious, but the word was unmistakably English, and Standish could have shouted aloud for joy. Here was what he had most felt the need of; a means of communicating with the Indian tribes.

The heartiness of his greeting somewhat surprised the brave who, however, concealed this under a mask of stolidity.

He announced himself as Samoset, chief of the Monhegans. He had learned a little English from the fishermen and managed to tell the planters that the name of the spot they had chosen for their abiding place was Patuxet or "little bay."

The Indians who inhabited that immediate section had, in truth, been killed by the mysterious plague which had swept the land four years earlier.

Samoset was full of love for the white men, so he said, but years before a ship had carried off seven braves of the Nausets, a neighboring tribe that now numbered one hundred bows, and it was they who had attacked the explorers; being determined to run no such risks again and to be revenged for the past as well.

"I for one cannot blame the poor savages," Standish observed, when he was telling Barbara the tale of the interview. "Samoset spoke the truth, for the story is well known to us. Hunt, the master of one of Smith's vessels, while his superior officer was absent, treacherously seized thirty natives of various tribes with the intention of selling them as slaves into Spain. A party sent out by your relative, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, suffered through this, for they had with them an Indian they had counted on to act as interpreter. The tribe rallied to this Epenow's rescue — and thereafter there was no trade nor help to be had from them."

"How canst thou charge thy mind with their strange names?" Barbara asked admiringly.

"I mean to know not only their names but their language," Standish told her. "Meanwhile we trust not Samoset absolutely until he is proven, and he is lodged for the night with Master Stephen Hopkins. That is one of the few families who have lost no member by death, and Hopkins and his oldest lad, and several of the bachelors who live there will take it by turns to watch throughout the night."

This plan was carried out, much to the puffing up of young Giles Hopkins who, boy-like, boasted loudly next day in the village street of the part he had taken in the affair.

"Mother and Constanta were so feared that they slept with the covers drawn above their ears," he declared.

"How knowest thou that?" demanded Constanta, greatly vexed to be shamed openly before the older girls.

"Canst deny it?" asked the lad tauntingly. "Thou needst not. I heard thee tell mother, and indeed 't is no shame for a chit like thee."

"I should never have slept a wink," Barbara avowed. "E'en as it was, I saw that striped face in my dreams."

"But thou gavest the alarm," Priscilla said. "That was brave enough."

"Nay, to my shame I gave it late," Barbara confessed. "At first my tongue was as dry as a smoked herring and I could utter no word. I quite forgot that Myles had said they meant no harm."

"There 's no other among us who could have done

as much," Desire Minter said, a thought truculently, her eyes ever on Priscilla.

"Oh, could we not?" Young Giles took up the challenge. "I had no fear. I would have shot my arrow at him or ever he had trod the streets had I but seen him. I have a bow made like to the one found in one of the Indian graves. It is as good as Samoset's and, for all he had two arrows to my one, one of his lacked a point."

"Doubtless, an his whole tribe came against us, it would be thee alone who would send them to the right about," Constanta gave her brother a friendly shove. "Tell us what happened at the council?"

"They would n't let me in," Giles acknowledged with some resentment, "but I saw Samoset ere he left, and he went away well pleased. They gave him a knife, a ring and a bracelet. The last be womanish gifts, but I would have liked well to have such a knife."

"He will return ere long," Barbara nodded her head confidently.

"Aye, so Captain Standish thinketh," Priscilla put in, "he wisheth him to return, bringing others of his tribe."

It was with difficulty that Barbara restrained a slight start. Desire Minter's scornful eyes were on her, seeming to say, "Remember what I told you. Remember!"

It was absurd on the face of it, but how did Priscilla come to know what Myles thought? Barbara

resolutely put this speculation away from her, yet it would return.

"Tell us, Constanta," she asked, determined to forget it, "what like of food did the savage eat? Did he ask for raw meat and tear it like an animal?"

"He ate like a bear preparing for a long winter," Constanta laughed. "Biscuit, butter, cheese, good heavy pudding and mallard duck. All were gone in a minute. They say Master Jonas is a valiant trencherman, but I would willingly match this warrior against him. My step-mother thinketh that perchance these savages are not made like us but, like a cow, have four stomachs."

In truth Samoset was back no later than the next day bringing five others with him; but as this was the Sabbath the Pilgrims would allow themselves to enter into no barter, although the Indians brought skins to trade such as the English had never seen before.

The five braves finally departed, promising to return with the tools stolen in the wood some time before from Standish and Cooke. Samoset, however, was so satisfied with the comforts provided by the whites that he pretended to be too ill to leave and stayed on for four days, only with difficulty being persuaded to go at all.

"I wager he would still be with us had not mother cut off his supply of butter," Constanta told the other girls. "When he found there was no more to be had, he licked his fingers sorrowfully and said farewell."

"Thou art only rid of him for a time," Priscilla assured her. "Captain Standish told them all to return."

"He and Master Cooke want their tools back. Then 't is they who should lodge the painted heathen," urged Constanta, with some feeling. "At least so mother saith."

"Neither of those gentry have a wife at hand to prepare their tables," Priscilla suggested meekly, with downcast eyes.

Desire looked at Barbara mockingly and the girl, annoyed, was stung into speaking.

"If Myles hath invited guests, either white or savage, we can make shift to entertain them."

"Nay," Priscilla returned, "'t was not I who reflected upon thy housewifery. 'T was Captain Standish who remarked upon his lonely situation."

That evening when Barbara had set out Myles' supper, she turned to him of a sudden.

"Myles," she said, "why did you tell Priscilla Mullens that you had no one to wait upon your guests?"

Standish looked at the girl in surprise, then he took her fingers and spread them abroad upon his palm.

"Because," he made answer, "one day this winter I felt thy hand and knew it to be roughened by work for me and mine, and I am not minded to have thee slave to pamper the appetites of greedy savages."

Comforted by this answer Barbara turned away.

At least it was not that Myles was so shamed by the state of his home that he had refused guests.

When the savages returned a few days later they had among them Squanto, the only survivor of the Patuxets on whose ground the Pilgrims were trespassing. This man's life had been saved by the very act of violence that had turned the savages thereabouts against the whites. He had been kidnapped by Hunt and so had escaped the pestilence. Taken to Spain he had been rescued from slavery by the friars, had finally, so he said, gotten away for England, was employed to New-Found-Land and other parts by one Master Dermer then engaged by Sir Ferdinando Gorges for discovery and other designs, and from there had easily made his way home.

These Indians were received in the open before the common-house, and those within could hear the speeches and see the sights, for it was evident at once that this was a more ceremonious visit than their previous one. The braves were now elaborately painted in red and white, or black and white. One had his snakey locks trussed up like a cock's comb, with a fox's tail dangling from it. They wore leggings to the thigh, leathern waist-cloths and deerskins thrown over the shoulder.

The missing tools were returned with some ceremony, then Samoset stepped forward.

"The great Massasoit, grand sachem of the Wampanoags, in the land to the north of the Narragansetts,

and his body-guard are coming to look into the faces of the white men," he announced.

No news could have been more welcome.

"Gladly will I go forth to meet the noble chieftain," Captain Standish cried impetuously.

CHAPTER XV

TO GO OR STAY

MYLES STANDISH'S words had scarcely ceased to resound when Governor Carver laid a cautious hand upon his arm.

"The safety of the town is in thy keeping," the older man said, warning in his low tones. "Call for a volunteer. Thou art needed here."

"I will meet the great chieftain!" Edward Winslow stepped forward eagerly. "I have no one here dependent upon me," he ended, speaking the last words rapidly, in order that the Indians might not catch their import.

"Put on a dress of honor, then," Standish suggested, none too pleased that he himself was held back from going, by his duty to the settlement.

Winslow nodded comprehension and went off to assume his armor, for the protection it would afford against treachery.

But no treachery was intended. At his own suggestion he remained in the Indian camp as a hostage for Massasoit's safety, while the sachem and his braves ventured into the white settlement, to be met by Captain Standish bringing with him, to act as interpreter, Master Williamson, the ship's merchant, who had some knowledge of the Indian tongue.

"'T was a strange experience," he told Barbara and Desire, that evening as they sat at supper. "The savages cast down their bows to show that they came as friends, and we stepped forth unarmed to meet them. Massasoit advanced in front of his escort, and I vow there was a majesty in the man, e'en though his face was painted a sad red and his hair and skin shone with oil."

"I saw him not," said Barbara. "We took the green rug and cushions to the house that is building and then came back to prepare the meat for his entertainment."

"He relished it, and also the strong waters," Standish told her. "The sachem sat upon the largest cushion beside our Governor, who had arrived with all the pomp we could muster, heralded by drum and trumpet and followed by musketeers. The Governor kissed his hand and he kissed the Governor's cheek, but he is a timid king, for I marked his trembling. In truth I doubt not the ceremony impressed the savages, though they can keep their faces as if carved in stone."

"Dost think thou canst trust them, Myles?" asked Barbara anxiously.

"I trouble not my head with any thought about it, because I know we must," Standish answered lightly. "How many times must thou be told, Barbara, that naught is gained by seeking cause by worriment? At all events we have entered into a friendly pact with Massasoit, and if he loveth us not so much as he saith,

which well may be, for it is not only savages who protest greatly out of politeness, at least we know that he holdeth our firelocks in grave respect."

Thus was entered into a treaty that secured peace between the parties to it for over fifty years, lightening one of the plantation's chief anxieties.

As the time set for the sailing of the *Mayflower* drew near the Pilgrims naturally dwelt much upon their fatherland in their minds. They saw the seamen putting the ship in trim for the voyage home and there were many whose thoughts returned with longing to the peace and comfort they had left behind. Not all of the company were Separatists. Some had never tasted of exile in the Low Lands and these might well be tempted to set their faces toward England again after all they had endured in the new world.

One fine evening when the day's work was done Barbara and Desire Minter were seated on the rude step of the Standish house enjoying the sudden warmth and lengthening daylight when John Alden, still pale and thin from his recent sickness, came up the street toward them.

He stopped when he reached them.

"Is Captain Standish within?" he asked, brusquely.

"Give you good e'en, Master Alden," Barbara said with marked ceremony. "No, my guardian is not at home. He and Master Bradford have gone to consult with the Governor, but he will return ere long. Will you not be seated to await his coming?"

Instead of answering John Alden stood beside Barbara, looking down at her from his great height with a smoldering resentment in his blue eyes.

"Why do you miscall me 'Master' Alden?" he asked. "Well you know that I am but a yeoman. Plain John Alden, cooper, and no gentle."

"That last is as you will it," Barbara replied. "For my part I think you are perverse and pride yourself on being unpolite."

"What mean you?" asked Alden, a little taken aback at this view of his manners.

"There is the pride of birth," Barbara answered. "'T is a very silly pride. I know, because I set great store at one time on my kinship to a man who, in the end, proved to be a thief and worse. And there is your pride, which asketh that every one shall confess that you are not ashamed to be a yeoman and no more. To me it seemeth that the one pride is as false as the other."

"You 're a strange maid," said Alden. "You reason like a man."

"Nay, then," Desire spoke for the first time, "there 's naught man-like about her. She 's a maid, and a timid maid at that."

"At times," Barbara acknowledged laughingly, "but I have no fear of — of John Alden, yeoman —" What more she might have said was interrupted by the arrival of Myles.

"Alden," he cried abruptly, "we were but just talking of you."

"'T is about that I came to speak to you, Captain Standish," John replied, and the two girls rose to go, feeling that the young man wanted to see Standish alone.

"Nay, do not go." Alden stayed them. "I have naught to say that all will not know tomorrow. I 'm for home in the *Mayflower*."

"I grieve to hear it," said Standish. "We had hoped you would elect to remain among us. There is here every opportunity for a man like you to rise to prominence."

Alden broke in upon what he was saying with a discordant laugh.

"A cooper!" he exclaimed, lashing himself with his own scorn, "how can such an one become other than he is?"

"Not by being a coward, of a certainty," Desire Minter interposed unexpectedly. "Not by so greatly fearing what is said of him that many times daily he remindeth himself, and everyone else, of his origin, lest they should be beforehand with him. And above all, Master Cooper, not by running away." With which words and a rough "Good-night!" she was gone.

"A strange maid," gasped Alden, aghast.

"The second you have found tonight," Barbara laughed, preparing to follow Desire, "but take the word of a maid who knoweth other maids, John Alden, and stand fast!" Having said which she, too, set out for Carver's.

"And now that we are alone and can talk sensibly, without riddles, conundrums or hidden meanings," remarked Standish in his own bluff way, "is there naught that can turn you from your determination?"

"Half an hour agone I should have said you nay and meant it," Alden said, scratching his head sheepishly. "Now I am none so certain. I should like to have a word or two more with Mistress Barbary."

Standish started forward impetuously and then restrained himself with equal suddenness.

"Barbara is but a child," he spoke hesitatingly. "You must not lay too great weight on what she may chance to let fall unthinkingly."

But Alden shook a stubborn head.

"She is no child," he declared. "She is a wise young maid. I must speak with her again."

"Tomorrow! Tomorrow!" said Standish a trifle testily. "She will be abed by now."

"Nay, she will scarce have reached the Governor's door," protested Alden. "I 'm after her. I 'll let you know my decision in the matter of the return anon."

"You said you were for England!" exclaimed Myles, but Alden paid no heed to this remark, turning quickly along The Street toward the Governor's.

Priscilla Mullens was coming toward him; but, to her lasting astonishment, he brushed by her without conversation other than a hasty "Give you good e'en." The girl walked on almost in a daze to where Standish was standing, still fuming.

"Young John Alden left thee in some haste," she remarked. "Hadst thou been quarreling?"

"Nay, then, why should we quarrel?" Standish asked, looking sidewise at her. "I like the young man well enough."

"He seemed so mazed in his mind as to have no eyes for — for anything," Priscilla said. "I but look for an explanation of it."

"And it is not far to seek," Standish blurted out. "He was running after Barbara and, in sooth, had no eyes for any save her."

For a second Priscilla stood speechless, then she gathered herself together and tossed her head.

"Hath she taken him for her bachelor?" she asked airily. "Doubtless that will make a most suitable match."

"Talk not to me about suitable matches," retorted Standish with a flash of temper. "Nor, I pray you, put such ideas in Barbara's young head. She is but a child, and, as her guardian, I shall refuse to entertain any proposals for her for years to come, no matter how suitable."

"Nay, then," said Priscilla, a thought snappishly, "thou hast naught to fear from me. I shall not discuss the matter with Barbara. In truth, now that I really consider the case, I retract my first statements. Thy ward, especially one who is cousin to Sir Ferdinando Gorges, would scarce demean herself to a cooper."

"And now, like all females, you needs must rush to

the other extreme," Myles grumbled. "There is no sweet reasonableness left in the sex. The young man is a most worthy person. He is well instructed for his station. An he stayeth among us he is like to rise to a position of honor, as I told him but now; so cast not your scorn on him. My sole reason for opposition is my ward's age. Faith, an the man loveth her, he can afford to wait."

"Priscilla! Priscilla!" a shrill young voice called, "Mistress Brewster would have thee return. She saith it is too dark for thee to stray abroad."

"'T is Elizabeth Tilley," Priscilla explained, and with a hasty good-night she fled back down the street, while Myles, still full of a lingering annoyance that he knew to be unreasonable, entered his house, lit a lamp and sat down to calm his mind as was his custom, by a perusal of Cæsar's Commentaries, in an English translation, before he tried to sleep.

Meanwhile John Alden had followed Desire and Barbara to Governor Carver's house, where he rapped upon the door. One of the children who lodged there opened it to him, and he asked to speak to Barbara.

"Enter, John Alden," Governor Carver advanced to the threshold as he spoke.

"Nay, your Excellency," Alden replied respectfully, "I but beg a word with Barbara Gorges, if Mistress Carver will consent. The matter is somewhat urgent, touching as it doth the question of my going in the *Mayflower* or staying here, else I would not trouble you at this hour."

The benevolent old Governor looked at Alden amazed, then he chuckled with delight, thinking that he understood the case.

"Have no fear," he said. "Mistress Carver is not hard-hearted. She will send the maid to speak with thee, I know. Bide where thou art, and I will consult with her concerning the matter."

Alden seated himself upon the doorstep, while Governor Carver went in to his wife.

"The most love-lorn swain in these parts awaits thy permission to see his lady fair, Katherine," he whispered, well knowing his wife to be a very earnest matchmaker.

"Now who is that?" Mistress Carver's interest was at once aroused. "Is someone casting sheep's eyes at our good Desire?"

"Nay, nay," chuckled the Governor; "for once thy woman's wit hath failed thee. 'T is John Alden," he added mysteriously.

"Then 't is his wits are astray," said Mistress Carver looking her astonishment. "He must know right well that Priscilla liveth with Mistress Brewster. He hath come to the wrong house."

"Not he," Governor Carver declared. "His head is fast upon his shoulders and not so easily turned as some of you have thought. 'T is our pretty Barbara he hath had in mind all the time."

"Barbara!" eyclaimed the lady, quite astonished, "Barbara, sayest thou?"

"He waiteth without now for thy permission to

speak with her," the Governor said, nodding his head triumphantly.

"Send her out at once," Mistress Carver was in no doubt as to what should be done in this case, "but warn her not to wander from the door. She is overyoung for the thought of marriage, yet I should rather that she married young than not at all. More especially as she is an orphan."

Barbara received word of John Alden's summons with no little surprise. However, she went to the door without embarrassment and seated herself on the seat beside him, whereupon the young man, scorning all preliminaries, dashed into his subject.

"You bade me stand fast. Wherefor?"

Barbara hesitated a moment. It is one thing to feel sure that a man is in love with a reluctant lady but quite another to tax him with it to his face. However, reasoning that if she were mistaken he had but to tell her, with no harm done, she, too, plunged boldly into her argument.

"I crave your pardon for presumption, John Alden," she began gravely, "what I say I say in friendship." She held out her hand frankly and as frankly Alden took it. As their hands were thus linked for the space of a moment, Priscilla, side by side with Elizabeth Tilley, who had been sent to fetch her, passed by, going to Brewsters' where she lived. Without embarrassment Barbara disengaged her fingers and called a friendly good-night to them. Elizabeth called back and

waved her hand, but Priscilla entered the door with a bent head, saying nothing.

The interruption to Barbara's argument was but momentary and she went on.

"An I am not misled by appearances, you love Priscilla Mullens. How will it help you to win her to go hence in the *Mayflower?*"

Alden did not raise his head as he replied gruffly.

"I 've given over all thought of Priscilla Mullens. I 'm not minded to stay here to throw my heart at her feet that she may use it as a kick-ball."

"Nor would I urge you to," answered Barbara quickly, "but I hold that you should not desert her."

The man started.

"In scarce more than a fortnight she hath lost father, mother and brother. Is she to lose her lover as well?"

"She never valued him," Alden muttered.

"I think she did," Barbara interrupted, "although, perchance, she knew it not herself. You see Priscilla is very proud and so are you."

"I proud?" cried John. "This very night you chided me that I was too humble."

"What you call humility I call pride," the girl declared. "'T is a point of honor with you to flaunt in Priscilla's face the fact that you were not born of a great family like Captain Standish. Believe me she hath learned that lesson. 'T is time she went on to a greater one."

"And what is that?" Alden's interest was growing.

"To forget it!" Barbara answered gravely. "She, too, hath her peculiar pride, as I have said; and you have seemed set upon wounding it. Now it remains for you to teach her so to love and honor you that all else will seem as naught in comparison."

"Would that I could," groaned Alden, burying his head in his hands.

"I do not promise that you can." Barbara spoke slowly, giving each word its full weight, "although I think it, for at least you have no serious rival. But, John, I hold that a lover who considereth himself first is but a poor thing. Until Priscilla hath found a mate, if your love is true love, you cannot leave her without a defender in this stern land."

She rose to her feet as she spoke and again held out her hand.

"Good-night! Ponder well my words," she said, and turned into the house to be met with questioning glances and some gentle raillery from Mistress Carver, which embarrassed her not a whit, as she well knew that to John Alden she had as much personality as if she had been his elderly maiden aunt. However, the goodwife's view of the matter amused her, and she troubled not to combat it except to Desire, whom she did not care to have misunderstand the situation.

The following day the girl awoke with the sense of something unusual impending. At first she could not

remember what it was, then, with a start, she recalled the fact that a meeting had been called at the common-house to confer with Master Jonas. The *Mayflower* and her crew were at length ready to sail, and it was probable that at this council it would be decided who was to go and who to stay.

As the morning progressed without news of what was going on in the council-chamber her anxiety grew, and she kept glancing through the open doorway to see if any messenger was on the road to bring the Governor's lady word of how the meeting had sped.

Spying Priscilla Mullens setting out some linens to bleach in the sun, she ran out to her.

"Pray ask Mistress Brewster to allow thee to come with me to the common-house," she coaxed. "Dame Billington hath a certain skill in lace-making and promised to show me a stitch or two, and, beside, I have a curiosity to know who will elect to leave our company."

"I 've been somewhat tempted to go back myself," said Priscilla moodily. "I have a brother living in England, and a sister too; but both are married, and I like not the thought of sitting down at another's fire side."

"I do not know if Master Jonas hath offered passage to lone women," Barbara said, "but, for my part, I shall stay here. I love the land, and count our hardest times as past and gone."

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

From me He hath already taken all, so no worse can come. Mayhap it was a sin but in my illness I prayed that I, too, might be released."

"It was no sin," Barbara interposed sturdily. "It was a part of the sickness. There was scarce one of those stricken who did not beg to be let die in peace. But now thou art well again and a model of fortitude to all the company. I am right well assured that thou wilt not desert us."

"In truth," Priscilla said, blushing with pleasure at these words of commendation, "knowing that there was scarce a family spared such grief as mine, I have tried to bear it uncomplainingly . . . Come, I 'm not needed at the moment, as Mary promised that she would peel the onions for the noon-meat. So let us run to the common-house and learn the news."

William Bradford was on his feet as they slipped through the open doorway.

"I can but repeat his Excellency's words," he declared. "The Lord hath supported us in our afflictions. He hath led us into the Promised Land. Here, so long as it is His will to spare me, I shall abide."

He sat down.

Myles Standish sprang up at once.

"My ward, and I too, will stay," he said briefly.

Master Fuller next spoke.

"A chirurgeon hath a duty to perform. My sister, her children and I go not."

John Howland was spokesman for most of the bachelors of the congregation. They elected to stay,

and various others, married and unmarried, spoke up without hesitancy.

"I see I go not back with a full ship," Captain Jonas said. "Have all elected to remain?"

"Nay," said Myles Standish, "John Alden hath not spoken."

At these words the young man got to his feet. He looked past Myles to Barbara and smiled, and she smiled back with perfect understanding.

"I stay," Alden said.

CHAPTER XVI

THE *MAYFLOWER* SAILETH

AT John Alden's words a cheer rang out in which even Master Jonas and those who accompanied him from the ship joined. In truth the steadfast little band was worthy of that acclaim. With the wilderness surrounding them on every side, with scant comforts and no luxuries, still battling with insidious illness, their dauntless courage was an inspiring sight. No one would desert, but two people had marked the glance exchanged between John and Barbara and put their own interpretation thereon.

Even when, with her water-butts filled the *Mayflower* was ready to set out, none had faltered.

Many there were who went to the shore for a last look ere she sailed. Most of these had letters to send, but when the master had gathered together the square of sailcloth which had been spread to receive them and held out his hand in farewell, there were no tears and no repinings.

With dry eyes they listened to the creak of the windlass as the anchors were got aboard, saw the sails set, the colors broken out and dipped, and responded to the parting salute with waving kerchiefs and a shout of good will; but, ere the *Mayflower* had cleared the har-

bor and laid her course for England, they were all back at their tasks.

It was an unseasonably hot day and, as none knew that such weather had not come to stay, all felt that it was necessary that the work in the field should go forward. Governor Carver especially, was impressed by this necessity and labored beyond his strength. This labor, combined with the heat, his age and suppressed emotion at the sailing of the *Mayflower,* overcame him; and that night the little colony was without its good Governor.

William Bradford was duly elected to fill the vacant office and thereafter, save for the sickness which continued to strike down one here or there well into the summer, all went prosperously.

After her husband's death Mistress Carver clung to Barbara, and the girl was so tied to her by pity and gratitude that she saw little of Myles.

With the help of Desire Minter, who was also a member of Mistress Carver's family, she still managed to see to it that the Standish cottage was clean and that prepared food was ever ready in the larder, although many of Myles' meals were eaten at Elder Brewster's.

The Standish household had received two additions. Hobomok, an Indian sent by Massasoit to act as helper and adviser to the whites, was taken under his roof in order that Myles might learn the Indian language; and when, anticipating the sailing of the *Mayflower,* John Alden had removed his belongings on shore and

was looking for a place to live, Barbara had suggested to Myles that he had more room than anyone else to accommodate the young man.

Myles had looked askance upon receiving this suggestion, but he fell in with it, counting himself a crafty schemer because he told himself that in that way he would be best able to watch over Barbara and protect her from John Alden's advances. Not that he disliked the young man. Far from it. It was only that his ward was too young yet for thoughts of marriage.

But there were older members of the community whose thoughts were turned that way. Early in June the first wedding was celebrated, and there was a fine wagging of tongues over it. A party was met at Mistress Carver's to mend the clothing of the men and boys who now had neither wives nor mothers to look after their forlorn estate. Of these there were many, for young Samuel Fuller was left motherless, five men had survived their wives, and there were several whose helpmates were to come later besides numerous lads and bachelors. So, although the talk was brisk, needles never faltered but flew merrily the while, for never before had this sewing circle had such a fine dish of gossip.

Mistress Carver, bowed with grief and increasingly feeble, shook a trembling head.

"It passeth my understanding how a woman can marry a second husband," she declared. "For my part I can find excuse for Master Winslow in that,

poor man, he requireth a wife to set his table and to knit his hosen; but Mistress White's husband is departed scarce three months."

"'T is scarce eleven weeks," sniffed Desire.

"And Master Winslow's good wife is dead but seven weeks," Mistress Brewster said.

"Did Elder Brewster disapprove, that he had hand in marrying the twain?" Mary Chilton asked timidly.

"Nay," Mistress Brewster returned, "he holdeth that public policy should encourage marriage, but nowhere doth he find it enjoined upon a minister of the Lord to perform a popish ceremony over the pair. Rather doth he think it matter for the civil arm, being tied up with wills, settlements and the like; a decision wherein Governor Bradford concurreth with him, wherefore he took the matter into his own hands."

"So they are married, and I, for one, shall say a word for Mistress White. The infection took both her husband and their servant, and she was left with that sturdy boy Resolved, as well as the babe Peregrine to provide for. I blame no forlorn female for taking help where she findeth it."

It was Priscilla Mullens who spoke these words almost defiantly. Her own state was now a lonely one, her father, mother and brother having all been swept away in the general sickness. Moreover, since the *Mayflower* had sailed in the spring, John Alden had ceased to pursue her with his intentions and, although she had other swains, and never admitted to herself

that she missed his constant care for her pleasure and welfare, yet once in a while she suffered a strange twinge at her heart.

Desire Minter was not the only one who noted her heat in this matter, for after the visitors had gone to their homes, Mistress Carver spoke of it.

"Didst observe sweet Priscilla, Desire?" she inquired. "Methinks that now, when haply it is too late, she is inclining toward that young worthy."

"How meanest thou it is too late?" Desire spoke quickly. "Since he got up from his sick-bed he is white and weak; but I 've had no fear that John Alden was not long for this world."

"Didst not know his heart had been caught on the rebound?" The good old lady leaned forward and whispered. "My dear husband called young John the most lovelorn swain in these parts; but it was our Barbary he dreamed of."

"Love-sickness is not fatal," Desire Minter laughed discordantly, "and having made one good recovery, haply he 'll make another. John Alden —"

Barbara, returning at this moment with a reel of thread and sorry for the young woman whose unrequited devotion was embittering her life, overheard the name and endeavored to change the subject and be rid of John Alden.

"Priscilla indeed made a quick recovery," she said, "although she doth complain that soon she will not have a hair upon her head. Dost thou not know some remedy for falling hair, Mistress Carver?"

"Aye," the old lady replied eagerly, having a memory stored with receipts for every ill man is heir to, "tell her to brew a good, stiff, sage tea. Some think the venom of toads should be added to it for efficacy, but I hold that to be a hokus-pokus to gratify the ignorant."

"She 'll ne'er touch sage to her yellow locks," said Desire with assurance, "and run the risk of darkening them."

"Nay, that is only temporary," Mistress Carver spoke in defence of her prescription. "'T will wash out as fair as ever. Moreover, something must be done to stop the maid's hair from falling. Her tresses are one of a woman's natural ornaments, sent her by the goodness of God, and she should show her gratitude by valuing them."

To this Desire made no answer. Everything about Priscilla she looked at through jaundiced eyes, a fact of which she was more or less aware; but whether she was moved in this by John's regard for the girl or by resentment for his sake at Priscilla's scornful treatment of him, none could say, not even Barbara, who knew her best of all and who had come to an understanding of her real nature through admiration for her bravery and endurance during the epidemic, even after she herself was stricken. Weakened by fever, Desire had risen from her sick-bed to help others and, before she was fit to stand on her feet, had insisted upon taking up a part of her duties. The girl could never forget this and, however cross-grained her friend

appeared, she always remembered the great heart hidden under the rude exterior.

It was well that she had a deep affection for Desire, for the two were destined to be thrown together more intimately still. Mistress Carver, well content to go, being fated soon to follow her good husband.

Desire, an older woman and unattractive withal, was considered an eminently proper person to have a care over the younger girl. Indeed in the whole colony there survived but four matrons; Mistress Brewster, Mistress Hopkins, Dame Billington and the newly wedded Mistress Winslow; so it was thought quite natural that when Mistress Carver no longer required their care, they two should go to live in the house of Captain Standish, Barbara's guardian.

Meanwhile summer had drawn on apace. The Indian, Squanto, had attached himself to the white dwellers in his old home and had taught them much Indian lore. From him they had learned to tread eels out of the mud with their feet and to catch the alewives that came into the creeks to spawn. The Pilgrims, lacking small hooks, had been very unsuccessful in their fishing, but under Squanto's direction they scooped up herrings in vast numbers, and, following his orders, as soon as the oak leaves were as large as the ears of a rabbit, they had planted their corn with a herring in each hill to fertilize it. This promised them abundant crops, and at last all bade fair to go well with the little colony.

Their one act of injustice against the Indians they

were now enabled to set right. They paid for the corn they had taken on their arrival at Cap-Codd, and thereafter had easy consciences.

One rainy summer day, Desire and Barbara were just setting ready the noon-meat, when an Indian, panting like a spent hound, flung into the room and fell on to the floor.

"Water!" he gasped. "Give water."

It was Hobomok, and he was in a pitiable state of exhaustion.

Desire, seeing the man's condition, poured a jorum of Hollands into the tankard she offered him and he emptied it at one draft and held out the vessel for more.

"And now the little captain! Where is he?" he asked.

"He is expected on the instant," Barbara answered, her voice a trifle unsteady. "What 's amiss?"

"Hobomok's news is not for squaws," he said with a proud gesture, and as he spoke Standish and Alden appeared upon the threshold, shaking the wet from their hats and shoulders ere they entered.

"Hobomok!" cried Standish in astonishment. "I thought you and Squanto gone on a trading expedition."

"Hobomok went and Hobomok came again," the Indian answered. "Hobomok hath the strength of the panther to overcome his enemies; but Squanto is a prisoner. Tomorrow Corbitant will light the fire for him, for they say that when Squanto is dead the English will have no tongue."

"But Corbitant is a chieftain of the Massasoits!" exclaimed Standish. Hobomok silenced him with a gesture.

"If Corbitant can lead the Pocassets against the English then will Massasoit shrink like ice before the sun of spring. Corbitant will be grand sachem in his place."

"Tell your tale," Standish said, his brow darkening. "What happened when you reached the Indian village?"

"Hobomok and Squanto were taken to Corbitant's lodge and set in seats of honor, but while the squaws were preparing the tobacco for drinking, strong hands were laid on Hobomok and Squanto and there was a heavy struggle. Hobomok, by the use of great strength and an English tooth escaped to tell the tale." As he ended he held up his steel knife, which he prized highly, for the Indian weapons were chipped from stone or pointed with nothing more deadly than the talons of a bird.

Standish paced up and down the room with steps that were so light as to be almost cat-like.

"Feed the man, Barbara," he said, "and then send him after me to the common-house. I go to call a council."

"Indeed then," declared the girl, "thou goest not away empty thyself. Everyone is now at table and will little thank thee for disturbing them ere they have eaten."

"I want no food!" Standish exclaimed. "That

insolent rascal must be taught a lesson straightaway."

"Truly spoken," John Alden agreed, "but I've heard you say that soldiers march ill on empty stomachs."

"'T is a womanish device, John, to confound a man out of his own mouth," Standish grumbled; but he subsided into his chair at the table and made a hearty meal ere he rose again. "And now have I my family's leave to go?" he asked half mockingly, as he put on his corslet and the steel cap that had worn his chestnut hair a little thin on the temples, and took up his sword and snaphance.

"Aye," said Barbara a trifle dolefully, "although there are times, Myles, when I can find it in my heart to wish thou hadst not been made captain after all."

Hardly had Myles left for the council chamber when Priscilla and Mary Chilton came running from Mistress Brewster's, agog to learn the news.

"Why is the council summoned?" inquired Priscilla.

"'T is an affair with Corbitant, chief of the Pocassets," Desire answered carelessly.

"Is that all?" Mary Chilton's tone was disappointed. "I suppose he, too, would like a horseman's coat of red cotton, with slight laces like his master Massasoit."

"The copper chain given him was of vastly graver import," said Priscilla gravely. "Massasoit was bidden to hang it about the neck of any messenger sent by him, so that we might know that he was more than

another hungry varlet come to feast at our expense."

Indeed the new and struggling little colony had been forced in self-defence to take this measure, so popular had their cooking-pots become among their Indian neighbors.

"Nay, 't is more of an affair than that," Barbara declared. "The Pocassets attacked our Indians and still hold Squanto. Myles means to rescue him, I doubt not."

"Thou takest it very calmly, Barbary." Priscilla was clasping and unclasping her fingers nervously. "Were it my brother I should not stand by with such cold indifference." As she spoke John Alden, who had gone into the chamber at the conclusion of the meal, entered the living-room again.

"Oh," Priscilla went on, with the hint of new understanding in her tones, "John Alden goeth not on this expedition."

"Nay," answered Alden for himself, "I would that I could, but I am a member of the home guard."

Without further words he left the room and Priscilla soon found some excuse to return to Mistress Brewster's.

Meanwhile no time had been lost by Standish in gathering together the men he wished to take with him. Hobomok, Indian-like, a new man once his stomach was filled, led the little party through the wet forest.

Corbitant, assured that the storm and the small number of the English insured him and his people against attack, was retiring for the night, when Stand-

ish and his handful of men approached the Indian village.

Warned by Hobomok to advance in silence, they surrounded the chief's lodge, threw off their knapsacks and blew their matches into a bright red glow to be in readiness, while Standish, alone, pushed his way into the savage stronghold.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY

THE dim light in the interior of the Indian lodge was yet bright enough to enable Captain Standish, whose eyes were accustomed to the blackness of the forest night, to see the room and its occupants.

Larger and more permanant than most of the Indian dwellings, the place had been thrown into confusion at sight of the Englishman. Some of the women cowered behind a stack of baskets, while others burrowed under a pile of skins; for no one present doubted that it was the knowledge of an overwhelming force at his back that emboldened the little soldier to enter their stronghold, and no one expected quarter.

"Those innocent of wrong against the white men need not fear. We war not upon women!" Standish said in their own tongue, having carefully conned his speech. "I come but for Squanto and Corbitant, the one because he is a friend, the other because he is an enemy."

At his words the squaws grovelled at his feet and even some of the lads ran to him, patting his knees with their hands and sobbing, "We women. We women too."

"Squanto?" he demanded, brushing them aside impatiently. "Where is he?"

Eager volunteers offered to fetch him, and the crafty Corbitant, his heart turned to water in his breast, seized this opportunity to escape. In the semi-darkness at the back of the great lodge he had wrapped himself in the blanket of a squaw and now managed to slip out with the messengers.

When a demand was made for the chief's surrender he was already deep in the forest, a fact that was not altogether unwelcome to Standish, as it relieved him of the necessity of punishing one whose dreams of leadership were now forever shattered by his own cowardice.

The English force took possession of Corbitant's lodge that night, and when next day the Pocassets saw the handful of men who had been sent against them, they were more profoundly impressed than if it had been a great army.

"How dared the pale-faces who were so few, come among the Pocassets who were like to the blades of grass for numbers?" one of the head men of the village asked Standish.

"The white men go not forth to shoot the rabbit armed with cannon," Standish told him contemptuously, and it needed not Squanto nor Hobomok to make clear his meaning, for many of the braves had been shown the great minion to assure them of the might of the English, and truly Corbitant had run like a startled rabbit.

So Myles returned in triumph to Plymouth, well

pleased that his blow at Corbitant's pretensions would seat Massasoit, the friend of the white men, more firmly on his throne of leadership.

Barbara greeted Standish on his return with all assurance.

"Welcome back," she said. "Thou hast Squanto safe. I can see it in thy face."

"Aye, he 's safe," Myles answered, as he hung his arms and armor on their accustomed pegs, "but Corbitant hath the legs of a deer and used them to advantage. He fled, and I, for one, say good riddance to him! Thou wert not alarmed for me?"

"'T is strange, Myles, but once thou art gone on one of thy expeditions, there is something within me that assureth me that thou art safe. I verily believe that I will be forewarned of danger to thee."

"Then search thyself at this moment," said Myles lightly, "for I vow I am in danger of perishing of hunger, the savages having scant provision to offer us save a few ground-nuts."

Barbara bustled about busily at this suggestion and Myles seated himself at the table to watch her.

"One curious thing I heard in my absence," he chatted. "It seems that, some years ago, the coast Indians captured a French vessel sent to trade with them and massacred its crew, save for five men, whom they held among them enslaved. These Frenchmen are all dead now; but ere he died, one among them was seized with the gift of prophecy. He warned the

savages that a punishment would be sent upon them by the God of the white men, who was affronted by their injurious treatment of his people. Therefore when the pestilence came among them they knew it for this retribution. And, in fear of a similar sending, they have refrained from molesting us. Even now they begged me not to visit on the head of the innocent the perfidy of Corbitant."

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!" Desire had entered silently and heard Myles' tale. "Who can doubt that the plague was indeed a visitation sent by the Lord God of Hosts."

"Nay, Desire," Myles spoke jestingly, for the young woman was one of the most narrow of Puritans, and he liked to poke a little fun at her now and then, "dost really think a boatload of French Papists were worth such a todo?"

"Not I," answered Desire promptly, her eyes snapping, "therefore I am well assured in my own mind that there were some good Huguenots in that crew."

Myles let up a shout of good-natured laughter at this ready answer.

"Faith, there 's no man living can match wits with a woman!" he declared. "Take my word for it, John, and save thy breath to cool thy broth."

Alden hung up his hat as Myles addressed him and took his place at table, but made no response to this remark.

"I saw Squanto and knew that our expedition had

succeeded," he said. "All has been peaceful here during your absence. I hear that the Governor hath another undertaking planned for you."

"And what is that?" asked Standish, taken off his guard.

"You are to go to the squaw-sachem of the Massachusetts Indians to make with her a pact of loving kindness. Perchance like Captain Smith —" There was a twinkle in Alden's eye but Standish could bear no more.

"Pax! Pax!" he cried. "For all thy size thou hast a womanish tongue, John. I pity thy poor wife when thou hast one." Which remark put an effectual stopper on the conversation for the time being, Alden burying himself in his dinner and Myles casting side glances at Barbara to see how she was taking this suggestion.

The Pilgrims' first harvest was a bountiful one and, in gratitude for it, they invited Massasoit and ninety of his tribe to a great feast. There was some lack of breadstuffs, but small game was plentiful and the Indians went out with certain of the white hunters and brought in five deer which they bestowed upon Governor Bradford, Captain Standish and others, so that there was abundance of venison.

It was the first New England Thanksgiving day, and probably none has been celebrated since with fuller hearts. The steady beating of a drum called the

colonists to worship. While the Indians looked on in astonishment, the Faithful gathered in front of Standish's house, a sergeant leading the way; then followed Governor Bradford, in his long robes, while on his right walked Elder Brewster in clerical attire and on his left Captain Standish carrying side arms. After these came the colonists in their poor best, by twos and threes, and although the Indians were there as peaceful guests each man, as always, carried with him a musket or firelock to be prepared against a sudden attack.

Their prayers said and their thanks rendered to the Lord their God, the planters were ready to feast. A pit had been dug in the earth and a buck and several wild turkeys roasted therein; but there was scarce a spit, a bake-kettle, or a cauldron in any house not busy that day.

Barbara and Desire joined forces with Remember Allerton, Master Allerton's oldest child who was far too young for the responsibilities which had fallen upon her little shoulders on the death of her mother, and the three were very proud of their contributions to the feast.

"There was ne'er a burnt biscuit nor a smoky pudding in all our lot," cried Remember. "I love thee well, Barbary, for asking me to help thee, for I am as yet an indifferent cook and I should have been shamed before all the company had I had naught to add to the table."

"Come thou in to us whenever thou art in need of help," said Desire kindly, and the little girl thanked her sincerely.

"I do my best," she explained, "and my father and Bartle, and even Governor Bradford when he lived with us, have helped me all they can; but it seemeth to me that men are most unhandy about the house. I try to train my brother Bartle, but while he bringeth me wood and water, he maketh me more work in a shake that Mary doth in a whole turn of the hour-glass."

"Mary is a very wise and biddable child," said Barbara, for she well knew the pathetic pleasure Remember took in her younger sister, whom she kept as neat and clean as her mother had before her. "She is a credit to thee, Remember."

"Aye, is she not." The motherly sister flushed with pride. "I must go to her now, or someone will stuff her till she 's ill." She ran off happily and Barbara looking from her to Desire, thought what a blessing it would be for that family if Master Allerton would but turn his thoughts to the great heart living so near, who would make him such a good mate and his young children such a devoted mother.

With this in her mind she spoke abruptly to Myles who happened to pass by.

"'T is my belief that those who condemned Mistress White for her somewhat hasty marriage were wrong and Priscilla right," she declared heatedly. "There be several of this company who would be better off if they took helpmates."

Myles looked at her astounded. He had heard more talk of this sort of late than he relished and he never doubted that this homily also was intended for his special edification.

"Sayest thou so!" he exclaimed irascibly. "Who hath put that idea into thy little head? Tell me that I may tweak his nose for him. Was it John Alden?"

"Nay," Barbara answered, "though I doubt not I speak his mind in this matter."

"Oh, thou dost, indeed! Thou speakest his mind? Then let me tell thee it is not worth the speaking, and my word is the same though it be Elder Brewster, or the Governor himself, who have poured these maunderings into thy ear." Myles bolted from the house, leaving Barbara staring after him, too astounded at the turmoil her innocent remark had stirred up to do no more than open her mouth and stand with it so.

It was thus that John Alden came upon her.

"You look like to a young robin waiting for its mother to fill its beak," he said laughingly.

"I feel like a young idiot," she said. "Myles hath knocked down the house about my ears because I but ventured to think that Master Allerton's hapless children will be better off if he married a wife who would care for them."

"This marrying and giving in marriage is a troubled matter," John said. "Faith, Barbara, I know not if I did well to stay. My being here is no help to Priscilla that I can see, nor am I any nearer to obtaining the desire of my heart."

Barbara was poised on the threshold about to run to the common-house where the table was spread for the feast, but she stayed her steps and turned to him kindly.

"Give not up hope, John," she told him. "I cannot look into Priscilla's heart, but at least thou hast learned not to be forever rubbing her the wrong way."

"Faith, I say naught to her at all, so feared am I of saying the wrong thing," John grumbled.

"Come," said Barbara, even as she laughed at him, "I must not linger here. I may be needed. Moreover, the savages are to dance one of their wild dances for us."

"I cannot see why it is forbidden among you to dance around an innocent maypole yet you are prepared to find joy in watching painted Indians leaping around a camp-fire." John matched her pace to his as they walked along The Street side by side.

"Though I had none, Elder Brewster would have fifty good reasons to give thee," Barbara answered. "For my part, I would think it unpolite to fail in appreciation of our guests' proffered entertainment."

"Aye, we must keep friends with them," Alden agreed.

"And thus in time, seeing the loving kindness of the Lord, how he hath heard our voices in the wilderness where we were ready to perish, they will learn to praise him!" Barbara spoke almost as one inspired and John Alden looked at her with affectionate understanding as they entered the common-house side by side.

Mary Chilton, observing the two as they stood

deep in converse, turned to Priscilla with a chuckle.

"I 'se warrant John Alden would not eat goose-neck from thy fair hand at this feast, Prissy," she said. "Since those twain have lived at Captain Standish's he hath reconciled himself to thy coldness."

"Try him, Priss," suggested Elizabeth Tilley mischievously. "I 'll fetch thee a neck to test him withal."

"They 're wrong! He 'll eat anything at thy hands," Humility Cooper said positively, as Elizabeth ran to seek a plate. The neck of a goose was not in such demand in times of plenty that she had any difficulty in securing the morsel, so the girl returned with it in an instant and offered it to Priscilla, who drew back annoyed.

"Nay, then," she said, "'t is such a silly jest. And what care I what John Alden may think?"

"Naught! Naught!" Mary agreed, "else would we never have mentioned it. Yet 't is an amusing test, to see if he hath got his wits back where thou art concerned."

That indeed was a question Priscilla had asked herself more than once of late. True, she had no thought of bestowing her hand on John Alden, cooper; but like many another maid, she was not averse to his worshiping vainly from afar; and without reasoning the matter out in her own mind, she had an inward consciousness that his shackles needed tightening, if indeed it were not too late to attempt that operation.

John and Barbara still stood deep in conversation

when she took the platter and began to make her way toward them through the press. Barbara's quick eye had noted the girls in merry consultation, and now she placed a hand upon John's arm with a restraining touch.

"Pay heed to what I say," she whispered to him in warning tones. "Priscilla is coming hither to serve thee. If she hath a goose-neck on the plate she bears, I council thee to thank her politely and say thy taste is not for goose, but for a juicy collop of young deer."

"Nay," said Alden, "how can I refuse what she offereth me?"

"Thou needs must show some spirit!" Barbara declared. "The maids are making a jest of thee. Take the game out of their hands and play it thyself." With which warning she left him alone to meet Priscilla.

The girl stopped in front of the tall young man and raised her dark eyes to his blue ones.

"There is not room to seat the guests when we must feed so many," she murmured. "I have brought you your meat."

John Alden looked down at the platter in her hand gravely and critically.

"I thank you for the courtesy," he said, but he did not relieve her of her burden. As she glanced down upon the bony fragment on the pewter a recollection had come to him and he met her eyes and laughed. Now when John Alden showed his white teeth in a laugh he was a very personable young man, and Priscilla was forced to acknowledge the fact to herself.

"The jest is doubtless a merry one," she suggested, not unkindly. "I pray you tell it to me."

"Nay," said John Alden, "'t is so merry a thought more must share it. Let us go to the other maids and they shall enjoy it too. But I beg you, allow me to carry your platter."

He took the plate from her and led her directly to the waiting maids.

"This, to John Howland with my compliments," he said, pressing the pewter into the hands of Elizabeth Tilley, whose swain John Howland was. "'T is he who eats goose at this festival; and, for forfeit, I demand that you all serve me with choice morsels. Turkey with stuffing of Indian oysters, and collops of young deer, for above all else young dears take my fancy."

"Nay then, 't is Barbara who told on us, the naughty baggage," said Mary Chilton.

"I did not need Barbara to tell me that the geese we shoot are not, like Squanto's eels, all neck," John laughed, and the maids joined in heartily enough.

"He hath found us out and hath earned his reward," Mary Chilton cried, and thereupon they all set out to stuff him, till Alden vowed they meant to be revenged by killing him with kindness.

"There is no doubt thou hast lost him, Priss," whispered Elizabeth, "but I 'm none so sure Barbary hath caught him. I never saw a lovesick man with such an appetite."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ARROWS OF CANONICUS

THE women of the plantation were gathered one day at Mistress Brewster's, as formerly they had gathered at Mistress Carver's, to do the mending and to look after such tasks as seemed lighter when done in company.

The drowsy humming of Priscilla's spinning wheel was heard above the clack of tongues when, of a sudden, the outer door was pushed rudely open and the red head of the youngest Billington was thrust within.

"The *Mayflower* be come back!" he announced hastily.

Now such an announcement by any of the company save one of the two Billington boys would have thrown the meeting into a disorder of excitement; as it was, the work went calmly on, for the Billingtons were ever in hot water of one kind or another, this very boy having let off a musket in the cabin of the *Mayflower* so close to an open keg of powder that the safety of the ship and all on board her was attributed by the Pilgrims only to that special mercy always shown to His elect by the Lord.

Out of regard to Dame Billington, who was never quite at her ease with the ladies of the congregation, being one of those sent out from London by the com-

pany and inferior in education, Mistress Brewster clapped shut her mouth and said nothing.

But little Remember Allerton, who was nearest to the door, turned to the boy severely.

"Were you my brother I should tell my father to whip you for a naughty liar!"

"And whipped he shall be!" exclaimed his mother, "to shame me so before all the gentles."

"But in truth a great vessel draweth in to land." Little Mary Allerton had entered by the open door and ran to her sister, fairly bursting with importance at having such news to tell. "I saw it first, but he hath longer legs than I have and got here before me."

"Mary ever speaketh sooth," Remember declared with round eyes, and the women, catching up wraps and cloaks as they ran, hurried to the shore. A boat was indeed nearing the land and even as they watched her, she let go her anchor.

"Run, boys, and sound the alarm," Mistress Brewster cried. "All should be present to welcome the newcomers."

The boys, nothing loth, ran off. In truth to have sounded the alarm was a thing to boast of, for the children were strictly enjoined from meddling in any way with so serious a matter.

Moreover this was a great occasion. No ship had been expected, yet here she was before their eyes, a real vessel, not the *Mayflower* to be sure, but the *Fortune,* and good proof to them that in their exile they were not forgotten.

Indeed it was a happy day for kind Mistress Brewster, for the first boat to reach shore brought her her eldest son.

Master Winslow's brother John, and Master Robert Cushman were also among the passengers, who, for the rest, were lusty men but absolutely unprovided with the necessities of life.

"It passeth belief!" cried Mistress Brewster to the other females next day, "and all goeth to prove how right we women were who insisted upon being included in the first venture. Here now has come this boat-load of men. How they would live were we not here to fend for them I know not. They have no biscuit-cake, nor any other victuals. Neither have they any bedding save a few sorry things they had in their cabins."

"My good man saith they mean to load the *Fortune* and send her back at once. So long as she is here we shall be at charges for the entertainment of her crew," Mistress Winslow contributed.

"Must we take the needful food from out our own mouths to give them wherewithal to carry her home?" Dame Billington bristled aggressively at the thought, but Mistress Brewster wagged a wise head.

"We are enjoined to charity," she said. "We must provide for their necessities; but I advise you all to write to those who purpose to come after, telling them what they will need upon arrival, for it is ill-convenient to be caught like this. My son assures me that most of the men lack so much as pots and pans to dress

their meat in and, because of the heat, they threw away their coats and cloaks at Plymouth. I know not how we should coat them, except that there was sent over in the *Fortune* some burching-lane suits which we can turn to their uses. 'Tis plain enough that no woman had a hand in their supplying."

Indeed these new arrivals, coming at a time of year when their labor was of no value, were a sore drain upon the provisions of the plantation.

The *Fortune* sailed as soon as she could be loaded with a cargo of clapboards and sassafras, and two hogsheads of beaver-skins got in trade with the Indians. Master Cushman also went back in her to make a report to the company; but the poor planters were called upon to victual her for the return, although she was fated to have her cargo seized by the French and thus profit them nothing.

This drain upon their scanty resources necessitated the putting of the entire colony upon half rations, so that when the spring came again they were greatly reduced, some thin to emaciation while others bloated as a result of their restricted diet.

Time had made no change in the relations of the various members of the colony. The Standish household were a united and happy family. John Alden, more and more occupied with books and seemingly content to worship Priscilla from afar; Desire, as crabbed in exterior, but as happy, poor soul, as she was ever like to be; Myles occupied with his own business; and Barbara, at peace with all the world.

One evening in summer while the light still lingered Barbara was watching John and Myles at work moulding bullets, when the Governor hurried up The Street to burst in upon them with every appearance of haste.

"I regret that I am the bearer of ill-tidings," he said ponderously. "I have ever harbored the hope that we might be able to live at peace with the natives, but it is not to be. Look what hath just been sent us."

He threw upon the table a bundle of arrows thrust into a curious quiver.

"Now what is that?" asked Barbara, laying her hand upon it and then withdrawing it with a shiver of disgust.

"Whence cometh it?" demanded Standish sternly, not waiting for an answer to the girl's question.

"It was sent by Canonicus, sachem of the Narragansetts, whose tribes escaped the pestilence. If his messenger is to be believed they are to be numbered by the thousands."

"His messenger is not to be believed," Standish answered contemptuously. "'T is to brag and bluster he was sent here. Leave me to deal with him." He got to his feet and began to make ready his harness.

"But what does such a gift mean?" asked Barbara.

"'T is plain enough," the Governor replied petulantly. "The Narragansetts have declared war on us!"

"Then what is thy purpose, Myles?" Barbara went on, turning to Standish.

"If you would have a thing well done, you must do

it yourself, not leave it to others," he replied.

"But it is a long way to the land of the Narragansetts —" the girl began. The captain interrupted her.

"I propose to take Canonicus his poison-snake skin and make him eat it for breakfast," he declared loudly.

"Nay, then," said Barbara, "I think thou givest thyself too much trouble. There is a better way." She emptied the arrows from the rattlesnake skin and filled it with the newly moulded bullets. "Now add a sup of powder for seasoning, and we will see how that suiteth his proud stomach."

Bradford took the heavy quiver from her and looked at Standish.

"'T is a message the savages will read aright, Myles," he said. "What thinkest thou? Shall we try it?"

Standish hung his corslet on the wall again.

"'T is a message after my own heart," he declared. "A good round answer. Naught more will be needed."

And the event proved that it properly impressed Canonicus, for he feared even to accept it and never came against them as he had threatened.

With the neighboring tribes all inclined to friendship, breadstuffs became the colony's greatest anxiety. Master Winslow had visited the fishing fleet to beg grain, but the boats could spare little, so that but four ounces daily was weighed out to each person. Under such circumstances the loss of any bread by burning or souring was a calamity, and Desire took it upon herself

to look after Remember's baking. Seeing her start one evening toward the Allerton house Barbara turned to Myles.

"Thou nearly snapped my head off my shoulders once before," she said lightly, "for daring to mention this matter, but indeed, Myles, I hold that those among us who have lost their wives should wed again."

"Have it your own way," Myles muttered sulkily. "I've argued the point till I've no more words to spend on it."

He turned from her in a huff and, taking up a book, buried himself in it. Barbara, feeling herself snubbed though she knew not why, went into the chamber she shared with Desire and, as it was too early to prepare for bed, sat down by the window, opened the casement of oiled paper at the risk of inviting mosquitos, and, with her elbows on the sill, leaned out, dreaming.

In the living-room Standish sat with his book in his hand, reading no word. When Alden came in he threw the volume on the table impatiently.

"Sit down, John," he said. "I've somewhat I want to talk to thee about."

Thus invited Alden seated himself.

"There's no one of them all will let me alone," Standish went on irritably. "They prate of public policy. They talk of my duty to the settlement. Even Barbara, scarce in her teens, forever harpeth upon it. A man should wed again! Faith, I'm sick of the sound of the words; but they've goaded me too far. I'll do it! How likest thou Priscilla Mullens, John?"

Utterly taken aback Alden managed to stammer that he liked the maid right well.

Standish nodded, well satisfied.

"She 's a neat lass with true blue eyes," he said.

"Her eyes are hazel," Alden interrupted indignantly. "'T is that dark contrast with her yellow hair that is so —"

"Well, well! It matters not!" Myles declared. "She 's neat, as I said, and she 'll do. So hie thee down and ask her for me."

Alden could not believe his ears.

"*Me?*" he sputtered. "*Me* ask Priscilla Mullens to marry *you?* Surely you are jesting."

"No, no!" said Standish, "when I jest I choose pleasanter subjects. Thou seest this is the way of it, John. I 've often noticed that thou hast a dainty, womanish way of putting things, and surely there is no embarrassment in asking something for a friend? Why I could ask a maid to marry thee and never turn a hair. 'T is when I think of asking for myself that the big beads roll from off my forehead. Suppose she should want to know if I love her? Nay, now, thou art my friend —"

"But you love her! You must!"

"No such thing!" declared Standish indignantly. "'T is to satisfy the Governor and Elder Brewster and my other friends that I consent to this. Why should I love her? I 've never spoken to the maid an I could avoid it. But she 'll do, and I 'll go through with it, never fear. I 'm a soldier. I 'll face the guns."

"Nay, captain, you must hold me excused." Alden rose. "In your own words if you want a thing well done you must do it yourself, not leave it to others."

Standish clutched at the tail of John's jerkin as he moved away.

"Thou canst not desert me now," he said desperately. "I nursed thee in thy illness. In the sacred name of friendship I implore thee to help me!"

Alden bowed his head. Standish had indeed risked his life for him as he had for others.

"I have no right to refuse thee anything. So be it. I will speak for you, but suppose the maid will not listen to the proposal?"

"She will, John. She will," said Myles, cheerful once more. "They tell me there's no doubt of it. Why not go this evening? 'T will take but a moment or two, and the night is young yet."

"I — I must have time to prepare what to say," Alden suggested. "Will you not leave the time and place to me?"

"To be sure, my lad, to be sure," said Standish. "Only do thou not put it off unduly. When I have anything unpleasant ahead of me I like to get it over with; so set the day for the marriage whilst thou art about it."

Alden hastened out of the house, and Myles turned back contentedly to his book. This time he was able to read, for he had rid his mind of his greatest worry. He would marry the girl and then, perchance, they would leave him in peace.

Barbara having decided to go and see what was detaining Desire, passed through the room at this moment and he laid down his book again and stopped her.

"Now thou wilt be satisfied!" He looked at her complacently. "You all have goaded me into it," he added.

"Into what, Myles?" asked Barbara, quite at a loss for his meaning.

"Into this marriage," he answered. "You would have it that I should marry again, so I 've sent John to ask Priscilla Mullens will she take me."

Barbara looked at Myles as if she had never seen him before. Then she began to laugh, softly at first, then as the whole purport of what he had said went home to her, well-nigh hysterically.

"Thou hast sent John to Priscilla to ask her hand for thee?" she gasped. "Oh, Myles, Myles, no one save thee in this vhole world would ever have done such a thing."

"Eh, then," said Myles, boyishly, "there 's naught new in the idea. There are cases where they even wed by proxy. A most excellent plan, say I. And look thee, Bab, thou canst hold thyself lucky that John came along first. I was in two minds whether I should n't pick thee for the job,— forever nagging at me to marry as thou wert."

"I?" said Barbara. "I nag at thee to marry? I should like to know when?"

"This very night," declared Myles, surprised.

"Didst not say that those who had lost their wives should wed again? Thou canst not deny that thou didst."

"Aye, but 't was not of thee that I thought," Barbara said. "My mind was on poor little Remember Allerton, who stints herself to keep Mary fat and dimpled. 'T is her father who should wed, for his family's sake."

Myles was distinctly chapfallen at this explanation. "I ever nourish too touchy a humor," he acknowledged. "In truth I feared that thou hadst wearied of the task of caring for my household. 'T is a great burden for such young shoulders as I well know." He thought for a moment and then rose. "I 'm going forth," he announced. "John said he wanted time to prepare his speech in my behalf. Perchance I can find him and stop him ere it is too late."

"But, Myles," cried Barbara, "my words must not deter you. Surely you love Priscilla."

"Nay now," interrupted Myles crossly, "whether he hath asked her or not, I will not suffer this silly talk of love. I am no moon-struck lad. The most I can say of the girl is that she is neat and will do, if I needs must marry. But, if thou wilt let me off it, I care not what the others may urge. I 'd liefer stay as I am, at least till — " Myles stopped in time, thinking craftily to himself that he would not be the one to put in Barbara's head the idea that some day she might wish to leave him. "I 'm going to seek John. But,

if thou seest him first, thou canst tell him I 've cried off my bargain. Heaven send it is not too late!" He ended, as he went out of the house.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COURTSHIP OF MYLES STANDISH

THUS left alone, Barbara seated herself in the chair Myles had vacated and picked up his book, but not to read. She sat there pondering over the curious situation he had created in his impetuous, headlong fashion. There was a pang at her heart when she thought of giving over her charge of him and his into the hands of another; but how much less difficult was her situation than that of John Alden? No one in the whole settlement, that is save Myles, who never troubled himself with such matters, could be in ignorance of the young man's love for Priscilla. He had long been the laughing-stock of the company for it, and, although she had persuaded him to show some spirit at the Thanksgiving feast, it never occurred to her that it could have imposed upon anyone. So, in her mind, she saw John, the ardent lover, the sport of the whole plantation because he had won his love for another.

Poor, poor John, he would go home now. She blamed herself that she had ever persuaded him to stay. Had he returned to England in the *Mayflower* he might, ere this, have forgotten Priscilla's sweet smile and flower-like beauty.

She was interrupted here by the re-entry of Myles.

"Too late!" he said laconically. He threw his hat on the table angrily and drew up a chair.

"Why need he have been in such unseemly haste?" he cried. "I saw him through the open window. Priscilla was still at her wheel, although it had grown too dark to see the thread, and he was seated beside her."

"Do not despair," cried Barbara, seized with mirth at the topsy-turvy situation, even while her heart ached she scarce knew why. "Priscilla may refuse thy proffer."

"I wish I thought so," Myles replied dolefully, "but they do say she 's ambitious. Elder Brewster even spoke of a most worthy young man she 'd disdained because his origin was humble. Now I 'm a Standish of Duxburrow Hall. Even though I be cheated of my heritage none can deny my birth. Tell me, Bab, thou knowest the maid well, dost think it true that she had such aspirations?"

"I cannot say," Barbara replied. "Desire hath always maintained it; but then she is jealous of Priscilla's beauty.

Myles let out a sardonic laugh at this.

"Desire!" he exclaimed. "Now are not women strange cattle? Why should she care, that Priscilla hath blue eyes and pink cheeks like to a Flanders doll-baby?"

"That she had not," Barbara declared, anxious to lead the conversation away from Desire and her un-

happy reason for jealousy. "Her eyes, which are her greatest beauty, Myles, are dark."

"What doth it matter?" Standish shrugged his shoulders. "I mind me now. John said a word of that. He 's a womanish person is John, for all his bigness." Myles, being small, was given to condemning the size of larger men. "'T is plain he can name the shades of all the eyes in the plantation, while as for me there 's not a woman's I could set a color to save thine, Barbara."

The girl started at these words, but hearing voices without, she made no answer and Desire and John Alden entered together.

One glance at John's face, which was utterly downcast, satisfied Barbara that Priscilla must have given her consent to the proposed alliance and, she felt moved to take Desire away that no one with a seeing eye should be a witness to his humiliation.

"Desire," she cried, "how late thou art. I 'm dead with sleep."

"I but waited to teach Remember the Hundredth Psalm," Desire explained. "The child is so mightily well intentioned I 'se warrant little Mary will know it as well as she doth in a week's time."

The two passed into their chamber, still discoursing of the Allerton children, while Myles turned impatiently to John.

"Well, out with it, man! What said you and what said she? And when is the wedding set for?"

Alden stood at the foot of the table turning his hat uneasily in his fingers.

"The matter is not so quickly explained, Captain," he said at last with considerable hesitation. "Mayhap I had better begin at the beginning."

"Then stop twiddling thy hat — and take not too long over it," Myles assented grumblingly. "Already thou hast stood there for a space a time that would have carried me to Brewster's and back again."

"But I did not go to Brewster's straightway," said John dropping the hat. "I turned down the King's Highway to walk upon the strand and arrange my thoughts; but, on the way there, I saw that your merits were so great and so well known as to need no trumpeting from me, and I turned me about straightway and reached Mistress Brewster's door, all wet from the heat."

"Had you but known it there was no such need of haste," Standish muttered. "On with your tale, man."

"Priscilla was alone in the living-room, singing a psalm at her work." Alden put up a hand to his brow and wiped it, as though in truth he had not yet recovered from his haste. "The carded wool was piled beside her like a snowdrift."

"Well do I know what wool looks like," interposed Standish impatiently. "What said you and what said she, that 's the gist of the matter."

"I said, 'Give thee good even,' and she said, 'Pray be seated,'" John faltered.

"And then?"

"She asked if I came to seek Elder Brewster and I said my errand was to her."

"So far well. What next?"

"Next, I think I said she looked lonely there."

"Now what was the use of that?" Myles snorted. "A mere waste of words, while I sat here feeling as if I was toasting upon a grid."

"'T was a very useful remark," John asserted indignantly. "I told you I would have to go about the business in my own way. If you wished to command the maid to marry you at the mouth of a blunderbuss, you should have gone yourself."

"Well, well, had I done so I would doubtless have been just as badly off," Myles said dolefully. "On with your tale. I will endeavor not to interrupt again."

"She told me than that she was lonely, very lonely. That the Brewsters, and the other maids, were good and kind but she felt the lack of anyone belonging to her. She thought that, haply, she would return to England on the next ship as ever came over. Thereupon I told her that I, too, was lonely, having no family in the plantations, but that for me there was no help while for her there was."

"Now that was crafty of thee, John. Very crafty," said Myles, beginning to take an interest in the manner of the delivery of his message.

"She asked what I meant by it and hinted that I had a sweetheart," John went on, "but I let that go by and

told her that she was beloved by a good man and true."

"Nay, nay," said Standish, reddening, "this is a civil contract such as the church here enjoineth. I told thee there was no soft sentiment involved. She 'd expect me to begin cosseting her next."

Almost could Alden have smiled at this, but he was too deeply moved for humor, so he resumed his tale.

"Priscilla said, most maidenly, that all women liked well to be wooed, and then, pressing that advantage, I talked of your family and of your achievements, when, of a sudden, she interrupted me and asked of whom I was speaking?"

"And ye told her?" Myles asked, breaking in upon a long silence.

"I told her," said Alden. "I spoke of your heritage and of your family greatness. I recited your daring deeds among the savages and your place of honor at the council-table, and then — and then —."

"Well, man, speak out!" cried Standish, impatiently leaping to his feet. "Don't stand there swallowing thy words. What said she?"

"She said — she said —," Alden's voice grew smaller and smaller till it was scarcely audible, save for his distinct enunciation, "she said, 'Why don't you speak for yourself, John?'"

For a moment the two men stood at opposite ends of the table, leaning forward and looking into each other's eyes. The silence was absolute; then, with a howl, Myles seized the hats upon the board and threw them up to the rafters.

"She won't have me!" he shouted. "She won't have me!"

"Nay then," said Alden, loyally, thinking Standish angry at the slight, "I 've not given over hope of persuading her."

"Say not so," cried Myles. "I 'll have none of that. I 'll stand no shilly-shallying. The maid hath refused me and the matter is at an end. More especially as Bab hath explained that she 's not over-anxious for me to wed at present and I had gone forth to call the matter off with you, to find that you were beforehand with me, being already at Brewster's."

"You mean that you are not now desirous of wedding with Priscilla?" Alden faltered, scarce able to believe his ears but already searching for his hat.

"Not I!" said Standish shamelessly. "Nor do I intend to be led into such a net again. I shall at once spread it abroad that the maid hath refused me most despitefully, lest perchance she should think better of it in the morning and wish to hold me to the bargain."

He ran to Barbara's door and pounded on it with his fists.

"Bab," he cried, "awaken! Priscilla Mullens scorneth me. She will not wed me, woo I never so sweetly. Wake up, I say!"

"Nay then, Myles." Barbara's voice came clear and cool from the other side of the oaken door. "Dost think that any but the dead could sleep with thee roaring at John without there? Go thou to bed. Belike

Priscilla will think better of it the next time of asking."

"She 'll have no such chance," Standish declared. "She hath set her heart on a prettier man." Then a thought came over him. How fared the courtship of John and Barbara. Would it please the girl that another was inclining toward Alden? He turned to John and, in a whisper, asked. "How is *she* going to like what Priscilla said, John?"

"She hath ever been my faithfullest councillor," John returned gaily. Already he looked another man, seeing the hope of a happy ending to his long probation.

He, too, came close to the door and cried through it.

"Barbara, you will scarce believe it, but Priscilla said, 'Why don't you speak for yourself, John?'" Then he turned and, hatless, stumbled out into the night.

CHAPTER XX

THE COURTSHIP OF JOHN ALDEN

WITHIN the girls' room John's announcement was met by a momentary silence. Barbara was thankful that she had extinguished the bayberry dip, whose perfume was supposed to keep away mosquitoes. She did not want to see the pain in Desire's plain face. Indeed it was the latter who broke the silence.

"Thou wert right and I wrong, Barbary," she declared frankly. "Thou saidst that Priscilla had a true heart and would listen to it in the end, and so she hath; for here she hath chosen between love and ambition. I 'm right glad, for now I know that John Alden will have a good helpmate and a loving."

"Indeed thou art right, now, Desire." Barbara hastened to agree with her, rejoicing that her friend took such comfort from the situation. In truth it seemed as if it were a relief to the mind of the young woman to have the matter settled, for she slept like a baby. It was Barbara who lay awake hour after hour, turning the recent happenings this way and that.

The next morning saw Myles in a high good humor. He was like a man who had received an unexpected pardon, having been under a heavy sentence.

"Public policy or not, they 'll catch me not again,"

he said. "By great good hap such as cometh not twice to any man, the noose hath slipped from my neck ere it was too late. If our Governor hath another maid to be wedded let him take her himself. He is as free a man as I."

So Standish rambled on happily; but John Alden came not to table. He had cut himself a hunch of bread and a piece of cheese and was away ere the others had risen.

"Now what dost thou make of that?" Desire asked, as she cleared away his unused porringer and spoon.

"Dost think he could be off to Brewster's so early?" Barbara wrinkled her brow over the problem.

"Nay," said Desire, "Priscilla would be angered to be shown off before the family."

"Belike he hath gone to pick out a place for their house," Babara suggested. "He will want to built it ere they are wed."

"That may be," Desire assented, but none the less she went about her work that morning with a worried look upon her face. Something told her that all was not going well with the courtship of John Alden.

Toward eleven o'clock when she had gone as usual to Allerton's to help Remember, Barbara who was watching their own spit, heard a low "Hist! Hist!" from without the window. Running over to it, she looked down upon John, who was stooped beneath it so that he might not be seen from within.

"Art alone?" he whispered.

"John, thou great gawk," she said, out of patience with him. "Where hast thou been?"

"Hiding in the woods," was the answer.

"Hiding in the woods?" Barbara repeated in amazement. "Hiding in the woods! John, dost mean that Priscilla will not have thee either?"

"Nay now," said Alden pettishly, "how can I tell when I 've not dared ask her?"

Barbara stood back, regarding him with womanly contempt.

"Thou hast not asked her?" she cried. "And why not, pray?"

"In the first place," said John a trifle sheepishly, but stung to speech by her disdain, "'t is as the captain saith, much easier to ask for another than for oneself, even when all is plain before one."

"Pah!" exclaimed Barbara. "Craven!"

"Aye," said Alden. "I deny it not. But secondly, and this is the greater hobble, how can I today ask for myself, who but yesterday exhausted my eloquence for another?"

"How canst thou not?" A dry voice asked over Barbara's shoulder. "Dost expect the maid to ask thee again? Nay, that would be too much for even a male's conceit. So get thee gone to Priscilla, nor come back here for meat till thou hast won her pardon. Not that there will be much meat that is not cinders if Barbary talks to thee instead of tending the spit." Desire ended, hurrying to the fire, whence a smell of burning warned her that all was not well with the roast.

Barbara, thus reminded of her duties, left the window in haste, so she did not see John loitering down The Street to Brewsters', where he had not the courage to knock at the door, which happened to be closed, but skirted the house to the window near which he hoped to find Priscilla working. She was there at her wheel and looked up, startled, as the young man appeared at the open casement, only to look away again in embarrassment.

Seeing her thus unable to meet his eyes, Alden's confidence grew and he perched himself on the window-sill.

"Thou art like to Bertha the beautiful Queen of Helvetia," he said laughingly, "who was so industrious that as she rode her palfry abroad, she spun thread from a distaff fixed to her saddle."

Priscilla raised her eyebrows but never lifted her dark eyes to his.

"Is it a holiday that thou art not at work?" she asked, trying to speak lightly. "I have not heard of it or haply I would not be here."

"Nay, 't is no holiday as yet," Alden answered, "though I look to thee to make it a holy day for me. Priscilla, yesterday I was a fool. I owed my life to Myles Standish and I let him persuade me that he had the right to enjoin me to speak for him. I was a fool, I say. I put my loyalty to him before my loyalty to thee. I crave thy pardon and ask thee to prove me in any way thou canst devise."

"Nay now," said Priscilla," they are watching us

from within. I pray thee hold my yarn while we consider this matter." She hung the yarn over his hands and began to wind it into a ball.

"What is there to consider?" asked John. "I am free of my duty to Captain Standish and I love thee. I have always loved thee since first I set eyes upon thy fair face, thou Mayflower of Plymouth."

At his words Priscilla dropped her ball of yarn and John, outside the sill and powerless to help her, gazed down into her softly flushed face as she rose from seeking it. A trembling smile was on her lips; but her eyes were still downcast as she said, "Thou speakest very well for thyself, John."

"John Alden, get thee gone to thy own meal or else come within to share ours." It was Mistress Brewster who called.

"The meat is on the table. I must go," said Priscilla.

"But thou wilt walk with me at sundown?" John begged, and the girl gave him a swift smile of agreement as she went to take her place at table and to make Alden's excuses, which he had been too preoccupied to think of himself.

It was a proud and happy man who walked back up The Street to Standish's. Going within he hung up his hat, then took his plate and presented it to Desire.

"I've done thy bidding," he announced, "and should have two portions as a reward. This love-making is hungry work."

"Nay, then," said the spinster, scandalized, "I have

ever heard that a mincing appetite goeth with true love."

"'T is plainly a lie," Alden answered, "for here am I could eat an ox, were such a thing known in this land."

Myles' entrance interrupted this talk.

"Give me to eat," he said. "I must hasten back. There are two ships in the offing."

"Now that's right good news, if they but bring food!" Barbara exclaimed.

"More like they will beg it," Desire said pessimistically, piling Myles' platter.

Her prophecy was not justified, although the new colonists brought them small profit. The boats were two of Weston's ships, the *Charity* and the *Swan* with over sixty colonists and plenty of food for them. The plantation at Plymouth was, however, asked to house these men while the *Charity* continued her voyage to Virginia and the *Swan* went to seek a suitable location for the new settlement.

For this the Pilgrims were very ill requited, as the newcomers were hard characters who repaid them for their hospitality by sneering at them as "Brownists" and robbing their cornfields.

Standish grumbled that their conduct was allowed to go unpunished, and the Billington boys, and such others of the Plymouth settlers as were caught thieving roasting ears, were publicly whipped for the sake of the example. But it was a relief to every one when their vessels returned for them and, leaving their sick

to Master Fuller's care, they sailed to their chosen location, a place eighteen miles to the North, known to the Indians as Wessaguscus or Wessagussets, which it continued to be called, although the settlers christened it Weymouth.

The Plymouth planters were none the richer for this visit and lacked many things when another vessel, the *Discovery,* entered the harbor in the fall of 1622. To their joy, this proved to be commanded by Master Jonas of the *Mayflower,* and their hopes rose high in consequence; but he treated them very despitefully, asking extortionate prices and showing every evidence of ill-will.

"I know not what possesseth the man," the Governor confided to Myles Standish, as they looked across the blue waters of the bay to where the *Discovery* was riding at anchor. "He means not to let us have even the beads and hunting-knives that we need so sorely to maintain our friendship with the Indians."

"What hath he to say for himself?" the Captain asked, his brow knitting.

"He laughs at us," the Governor declared. "First, he fixeth a price upon his goods, thinking it too high to pay; but, when we meet it, he vows a mistake was made and raiseth it again."

"He plays a cat and mouse game, eh?" Standish muttered under his breath.

"Aye, it even seems as if he took a vast amusement from our helplessness," said the Governor bitterly. "He sits in his cabin and receives us like a king, with

a sneer upon his face. I know not what hath come to the man."

"I think I do," Standish said. "Tell me, Will, what else beside the knives and beads do we stand most in need of?"

"Naught else is of such real importance, but why ask? The man means not to give us what we want. He 's made that plain enough." The Governor shook his head helplessly.

"'T is in my mind to ask him once again," Myles Standish said grimly, starting toward one of the boats drawn up not far away upon the beach.

"'T is useless," the Governor returned dejectedly.

"Mayhap," Myles said shortly, "yet 't is in my mind that you all will do well to be in readiness if Master Jonas decides to trade."

"Dost contemplate violence?" the Governor began, protestingly; but Myles cut him short.

"I mean to get those things we stand most in need of," he said, as he stepped into the boat, and a moment later he was being rowed across the dancing waters to the *Discovery*.

On the deck of the ship Captain Standish looked around him, searching the faces of the crew lounging about, but finding none he recognized.

"Where is the master of the ship?" he asked one of them.

"Below in his cabin, sir," was the answer.

"Is anyone with him?" came the next question.

"Nay, I think he is alone," replied the seaman, and

Standish, with a courteous word of thanks, crossed the deck and disappeared down the companion.

Outside Master Jonas' cabin he paused a moment, listening, and, at the same time, loosening his sword in its scabbard, then, rather stealthily, he lifted the latch, stepped within, and pulling to the door behind him, stood with his back to it.

Master Jonas on the other side of a deal table looked up from some papers he was reading and a cry of surprise escaped him as he recognized his visitor; then, recovering, he burst into a sardonic chuckle.

"So you have come at last," he snarled. "I but waited to have a word with ye ere I sailed away."

"I am here," said Standish scarce moving a muscle.

"Aye, and come to beg for goods I doubt not," sneered the master. "Well, go on. I vow there is none in this miserable company of Pilgrims to whom I would rather talk. Ye have need of certain things, I hear. Have ye the wherewithal to pay?"

"Aye, there is money to pay a reasonable price," Captain Standish replied calmly.

"Who said aught of money?" said Master Jonas. "'T is you, Captain Standish who shall pay my price, not in money but in pride, my little pot-soon-hot! Dost think I have forgotten what happened when last I anchored in this harbor? Thou hadst the upper hand then; but now I hold the winning cards. On thy knees and beg my pardon, ere I even listen to thy pleading." He had raised his voice and stood up pointing to the floor at his feet.

With scarce a sound Myles Standish sprang across the narrow cabin and in a trice he held his drawn sword within an inch of the master's breast.

"Sit in thy chair, thou dog!" he whispered fiercely. "One cry for help and thou wilt never sail from any port again."

For an instant Master Jonas looked into the eyes of Myles Standish and what he read in that determined gaze prompted him to obey, although he was by no means ready yet to abandon his scheme for revenge.

"Dost think to beard me in my cabin and get off scot-free?" he murmured, seating himself but keeping up a show of bluster and courage.

"Aye," answered Myles shortly.

"A word from me, and my crew will tear ye to pieces," declared Jonas.

"But, ere that word is said, I 'll have slit thy gullet like a fish," answered Standish.

"What wouldst thou gain? — For thou wouldst surely die after killing me," said the master.

"I should have rid the world of a sorry villain, Thomas Jones," replied the captain. "Nay, shake not thy scheming head. I know thy true name and what like a rascal thou art."

"But thou canst not prove it," the other railed back. "There 's not a man aboard this ship that ever sailed with me before."

"I have no need of proof," Standish answered. "Should I leave thee dead in this cabin, thinkst thou I would not get back to the shore alive? Who 'll know

till I 'm gone what hath befallen thee? Dost think the Pilgrims will not believe me and the maid who learned the tale of thy wrong-doing? Thou art not so well considered in our plantation that it will be over-concerned as to thy end. Nay, thou knowest well, without my telling, that they have no liking for thee."

"Aye, mayhap! but this Plymouth colony is not all the world," sneered the master. "Hast forgotten England still exists? Sir Ferdinando Gorges hath a long arm."

"Sir Ferdinando Gorges!" Myles repeated with undisguised surprise at the mention of this name.

"Aye, that 's what I said," Master Jonas retorted, taking courage as he thought he had produced an effect. "Thou dost not hold all the cards, thou little braggart."

For an instant Myles Standish stood in thought, his sword still held menacingly before the man in the chair; then, his voice thrilling with determination, he addressed him once more.

"Listen, thou," he said. "I 'll make a bargain with thee, and I charge thee to think well upon it, for thy life hangs upon the thread of thy decision. First, ere I leave this cabin, thy mate shall be despatched with knives and beads for our trading. Next, thou shalt tell me all the tale of this conspiracy which hath landed us upon this bleak New England shore and in what manner Sir Ferdinando Gorges is concerned in it. Think well, Thomas Jones. The decision is in thy hands. Thou canst save thy life an thou wilt; but

I tell thee plain I would as leave snuff out thy miserable existence as I would scotch a serpent. Thou hast the time while I count five."

There was no doubt in the mind of Master Jonas that death was very near to him. He could not look in the face of Myles Standish without knowing that each word his opponent said had the force of grim determination behind it. He himself lacked not a kind of courage, but that would do him no good in the present circumstance.

"Thou canst save thy counting," he muttered. "Be seated and I 'll tell thee. But what 's to keep me from having thee cut off ere thou reachest thy boat, my gamecock?"

"I have a friend at my side that will see to that," Myles told him grimly. "Nor thee, nor thy whole ship's company can stay me, so on with thy tale. I shall stand."

An hour or more later Myles Standish stepped once more upon the beach and Governor Bradford came running up to him.

"We give thee thanks, Myles, for what thou hast done. But how came it he listened so readily to thee?"

"I have that about me which persuadeth the most reluctant," Standish replied, and with a hand upon his sword walked off toward his home.

For some days he was silent and stern of face, so that Barbara was not alone in wondering what had happened aboard the *Discovery;* but he kept his own council until the vessel had sailed. Then, finding him-

self standing on the shore beside John Alden, who had been disappointed in securing certain necessaries for the new house he was building, he controlled himself no longer.

"There, by some oversight of Providence goeth one of the greatest villains unhung!" he exclaimed. "I tell thee this, John, because thou hast the wit to see that there was naught we could do in the matter."

"You mean Master Jonas?" asked Alden.

"The very man," Standish nodded. "Although Thomas Jones is his name, and I said as much to his face, the thievish rascal!"

"Nay then," said Alden, "I suppose he was within his rights to sell us naught but a few beads and knives, if it so pleased him. But, an he came not to trade, what brought him into our port at all?"

"He came to gloat," said Standish solemnly. "He came to be at evens with me, who had held him here for a time against his will on the last voyage. He hoped to find us in worse case than we were; but, even as it is, he told me another winter would finish us."

"He little knoweth the spirit of this company!" Alden spoke proudly. "Yet I cannot fathom why he holdeth us in such despite."

"He wronged us and I found him out, or rather Barbara did. The Dutch paid him to see that we were not delivered at their doors on Hudson's River."

John uttered an exclamation of horror, for it came upon him like a blow that this one man's veniality had caused the loss of half a hundred lives.

"You may well groan." Standish nodded. "At that time there was proof at hand among the sailors, who had all been paid as well as he, and I made him sign an acknowledgment which I gave back to him when he sailed, thinking never to see him again. Now he comes once more, but with a new crew. Yet at least I know the whole tale now, where before there was a part that was hid from me."

"Is there more to tell?" John demanded.

Myles nodded his head portentously.

"But mind you, Barbara must never hear of it," he warned John. "This is the story. It seems the Dutch had wished us conveyed to southern Virginia, where we would not have suffered from the climate. But there were other men with other plans, and they, too, had money to spend."

"How learned you this?" John interrupted.

"From Jones himself, no less though I had suspected for some time that he was the man he is, who had changed his name in order to get a new command. On my visit to the *Discovery,* I taxed him with it and forced the truth out of him at the point of my sword."

"I see not where all this touches Barbara," said John thoughtfully.

"You will," Myles assured him. "The tale is not yet half told. You have heard of the Northern Plantations Company?"

"Aye," said Alden.

"Sir Ferdinando Gorges, her cousin, he who did her

father to death, is one of the greatest of the noblemen interested in it, and he it was who cooked up this conspiracy to land us in their domain. We were stolen away from the Virginia company, like a babe from its nurse. It being well known to the Northern Plantations directors that no decent, godly men would wish to join them, with their riffraff of scamps and convicts, and their record of unsuccess and loose living."

"The great company have been very ready to give us all we asked and more," said Alden meditatively.

"Aye," Standish agreed. "They 'll treat us fair, now they have us safe. 'T is to their advantage that we should prosper. As for us, we have struck our roots here and 't is too late to change. But I like not this being the sport of a pirate captain. He was a bloody man on the corsair *Lion* in Eastern waters before he was captured and thrown into prison."

"Why was he not hanged in chains?" asked Alden.

"He was needed by a friend of Gorges'. A great nobleman who shall be nameless, to sail the *Falcon,* a ship of kine, to Virginia," Myles explained. "'T was John Clarke, who was mate on that voyage also, and the first man shipped on the *Mayflower,* who put forward Jones for the command; and indeed none can deny that he is an able seaman."

"That much credit we must give him," Alden agreed, "but think you Master Gorges was slain lest he get in the way of this pretty conspiracy?"

Standish stood for a moment buried in thought.

"I know not," he said at last. "John Gorges was a strong man and had such sound reasons for distrusting his cousin that his council would doubtless have been against any settlement under his jurisdiction. And his word carried great weight with Governor Carver, Elder Brewster and others. I myself know no one whose judgment I would have so readily have bowed to. And such a thought is but one good reason the more for burying the matter here and now."

"Aye," Alden acquiesced, "Barbara would be needlessly harried by it and to no good purpose."

"To no good purpose," Standish repeated, "but oh, John, it pleaseth me little to think that man has escaped without six inches of steel in his *weasand*."

Standish spoke so longingly that Alden was put to it to hide a smile; then he grew grave again.

"'Vengeance is mine. . . . I will repay!" he quoted. "Doubtless the man will come to a bad end."

"'T is plain that thou art turning Puritan," Myles sighed. "Soon I will be the only unregenerate one left.

"Nay," replied John, reddening a little, "I but repeated Desire's words."

"Desire or Priscilla, 't is all one to me," Myles laughed. "For my part, while it is doubtless an impiety to say so, I incline to the belief that the Lord will not hold it against me at the Day of Judgment if I have taken one or two like cases off his hands and spared him so much trouble.'

"Desire and Priscilla are not the only Puritans," John suggested mischievously. "Would it be well to let Barbara hear your talk?"

Myles stared at him in amazement for a moment; then he shook his head, honestly puzzled.

"I know not what thou meanest by yon riddle," he declared. "Indeed John, Bab knows right well that I 'm no Puritan. Moreover I am her guardian not she mine. Thou wouldst not have me pay heed of the babblings of a child of fourteen, I hope?"

To which John Alden vouchsafed no answer save inward laughter.

CHAPTER XXI

TREACHERY

THE new year opened with the marriage of Priscilla and John Alden, and the Standish home knew him no more. Barbara missed John sorely, for she had given him the place in her regard that a brother might have occupied; but she knew that he was happy with Priscilla and grew accustomed, as a sister would have, to his absence from the family board. And Desire, whatever her feelings, once John had left the house, never mentioned his name.

As the winter drew on toward spring the wasteful colony at Wessagussetts became a drain upon Plymouth's resources, and Captain Standish was forced to make trips far and wide in the hope of buying grain from the Indians. From one of these undertakings he returned grimly silent and forbidding.

"I think thou art not rejoiced to be at home again," Barbara pouted, standing before him challengingly.

"I am! I am!" Myles said absently, "but there is trouble brewing around Wessagussetts. Those men have no pride of race. They work for the Indians for a handful of corn. They 'll even steal from them. With our own people I know, an I cannot bring them grain, they will suffer in silence and make shift to do

without; but with that riffraff of Weston's I dread the next news I may get of them. The Indians have even commanded the hanging of one of the whites —."

"Was the man guilty?" Barbara interrupted.

"Mayhap," Myles said, "but that was not the point. 'T is one thing to punish willingly, quite another to submit to a command. The savages are taking the upper hand."

Then of a sudden he remembered to whom he was speaking. Barbara was a nervous child. He was wrong to supply her with material for legitimate fears, so he changed his tone and tried to speak lightly.

"Worry not thy little head over such matters," he said. "The remedy lieth in my hands. If I fill the stomachs of these Wessagussetts wastrels they will lord it grandly over their Indian neighbors." He picked up his barret-cap and started out of the door.

"Whither away, Myles?" the girl called after him, quite sure she had not get plumbed the depths of his troubles.

"I go to the Governor's. There is a meeting," he called back.

On entering Governor Bradford's house, Captain Standish found the others of the council there before him. Walking up to the table he opened his business at once, without undue formality, as was his custom.

"'T is in my mind that our situation is more desperate than ever it hath been since first we set foot in this land," he said. "On every side, wherever I go there is treachery in the air. The settlers at Wessagussetts

are scorned by the Indians, who begin to murmur that all white men are weaklings and rascals."

"We have our treaty with Massasoit," Bradford suggested.

"Aye, we have the treaty, Will, but where is Massasoit?" Standish asked. "Since he asked for the punishment of Squanto in the case you wot of, and it was refused him, he hath withdrawn his countenance from us."

"Squanto was a foolish and jealous servant," said Brandford. "but for so small a fault I could not hand him over to execution."

"Nay then, I do not say that the request should have been granted; but, ere this, some efforts should have been made to placate the chieftain."

"What is it you fear?" Edward Winslow asked. "I know well you are not frighted by shadows."

"I fear a general rising of the Indians," the little captain declared positively. "God send that I am wrong; but 't is my intention to watch with the eyes of a hawk then, if it comes and I can stamp it out like a fire that is just started, before it hath time to spread, all will be well."

Winslow nodded. He, perhaps better than any other except Standish, understood the Indians.

"Where think you the chief danger lieth?" he asked.

"Without doubt among the Massachusetts," Myles answered unhesitatingly. "They are inflamed by their hatred and contempt of Weston's men, and Wi-

tuwamat, one of their chieftains, is a firebrand."

"Then your post is where you can keep watch over them," said Winslow. "For my part, I will travel to visit Massasoit. Perchance I can assure peace in that direction."

"'T would be more than half the battle," said Myles, his brow lightening. "I had it in mind to start on another voyage about the bay, ostensibly for corn. We will meet here on my return and share our news."

With scant ceremony he glanced about the chamber and, including all in his wave of farewell, he left the house and made his way home.

Barbara was on the door-step, setting a stocking on the needles, and he dropped down beside her and took off his cap that the air might fan his heated brow.

"I 'm off again, Bab," he said. "I will need food for some days. Where is Desire?"

"I will call her," Barbara told him. "She is working in the garden."

That spring it had been decided that the community plan, under which Governor Bradford daily assigned to each member the work necessary, must be abandoned if ever the colony was to raise enough food for its needs, and already the benefits of the new method, where each family had its own vegetable and grain patches, were apparent. The women helped in the work, as did the children, who had formerly been both idle and mischievous, having no schools to go to and only such tasks as were set them in the evening by their

elders when they were not too tired to interest themselves in the rising generation.

Barbara half rose as she spoke, but Myles motioned her back.

"There 's time enough," he said. "I shall share your meal before we part. I go first to the Indian village that is nearest to us on the bay, to buy corn for those untoward settlers of Weston's."

His words were interrupted by a half-suppressed cry from Barbara as she seized his arm and held to it as if she never meant to release it.

"Myles! Myles!" she begged him, "do not go on this expedition! Never before have I made thee such a request. Never have I said a word against thy traveling hither and yon as thy duty called thee, but now thou must not go."

"Wherefore not?" Standish asked puzzled, then he remembered that he had been indiscreet in his talk of the Indians earlier that day. "I see how it is. I frighted thee unduly. But indeed in this case there is no cause for alarm. This little sachem I purpose visiting is well inclined toward us."

His words did nothing to relieve Barbara's anxiety.

"Pay heed to what I say, Myles. I am not jesting. Have I not told thee more than once that I should know it if thy life were in danger? An thou goest on this expedition thou art little like to come back alive! And thy life is worth more to this community than a few baskets of corn."

Myles wrinkled his brow reflectively and when he spoke he showed that he did not take the girl's words lightly.

"I am not one who scorneth signs and portents," he said, "and what thou sayest about the value of my life sounds reasonable enough at first blush; but Barbara, a little maid like thou art, of scarce fourteen years, cannot know what a soldier's honor is to him. 'T is enough to say that if I knew I were to die this night I still must go."

"Then take me with thee," Barbara said in a low voice, drooping her head.

Myles looked at her in amazement, then gave her hand which still clutched his arm an affectionate little pat.

"And how couldst thou protect me, child?" he asked gently.

"I could keep sharp watch for treachery," Barbara said. "I could wake whilst thou slept — I —."

Myles, more moved than he cared to say by his ward's devotion, jumped to his feet.

"Come," he said, offering his hand to help her up. "I cannot take thee, Bab. 'T is useless to set thy heart on it. Now be a brave little maid and make ready the food I will need."

Knowing from his tone the futility of further argument, Barbara went silently about her tasks and it was not until Myles was about to set out that she ventured upon any further warning.

"Beware of treachery, Myles," was all she said.

And he answered, "I shall sleep like a cat with one eye open, so fear naught for me."

She watched him go with a hand upon her heart and so sad a face that Desire demanded to know what ailed her. Barbara told her of her presentiment of evil and the young woman endeavored to make light of it for the girl's sake.

"There was too much onion in the stuffing," she said. "Belike 't is that which oppresseth thee."

Barbara shook her head as she turned away and Desire looked after her anxiously, but said nothing more. She well knew that there was no comfort she could give.

Meanwhile Myles set off in the shallop and, cruising along the coast with a fair wind, made the Indian village while the sun was still high.

Taking with him a man or two as escort, and warning his boat's crew to hold their firelocks in readiness in case of alarm, he walked lightly up the beaten path to the village and into the sachem's lodge.

The chieftain sat upon a pile of skins playing with a long, English hunting knife, and something in his narrowed eyes and his stealthy attempt to conceal his plaything, reminded Myles of Barbara's warning. It well might be that treachery stalked abroad.

"Where got you that toy, oh Chieftain?" he demanded.

"'T is no toy!" The Indian bared his white fangs in a snarl. "'T is a love-gift from Wituwamat, a great leader among the Massachusetts."

At this name Standish was at once assured that Barbara's fears were justified. Wituwamat it was who was stirring up the tribes against the planters, and he had never sent so valuable a gift without expecting a return. So now Standish drew his sword and measured it gravely against the hunting-knife.

"Wituwamat hath a long tooth," he remarked meaningly, "but methinks the English have longer." The chieftain scowled at him, but he was not blind to the lesson and his next words were spoken in more conciliatory tones although they still held a warning for Standish.

"Have the planters come hither to drink tobacco?" he asked, pleasantly enough to all seeming. "Alas, the Indians have none to offer. The old crop hath vanished in smoke, and the new one is still on its stalk."

"Good friends do not need the fires of the peace-pipe," Standish said, brushing this subterfuge aside. "I come to buy corn. For that and for that only."

The sachem's eyes lit up from within. Here, haply, was the chance to pay Wituwamat for the knife. There was no Indian in all the tribes who did not know the prowess of the fiery little captain. If he could be cut off, then indeed would great glory belong to the tribe that had encompassed his death and to its ruler.

"There is corn," the savage said cautiously. "Wherewith will it be paid for?"

"I have beads and goods in my boat," said Standish. "Bring the corn to the landing-place and we will soon strike a bargain."

The chieftain drew back as if offended. His treacherous mind was engaged in plotting a sudden end for all the party of whites.

"Call hither your men," he suggested. "Poor though your red brothers be, yet will they make a feast for you."

"When the tobacco is dry will come the time for feasting," said Standish as he rose. "Now I go to my boat. Let those who would sell come to me."

Proudly erect he turned his back on the sachem and stalked down the path to the shallop leaving the Indian, irresolutely fingering his new hunting-knife.

Standish had not gone half way to the shore ere the sachem reached a decision. He sent certain of his people to barter with the English on the strand and called to him a visitor from one of the Cap-Codd tribe.

"The mighty ones have spoken," he said, oracularly "No longer will they hold back their hands in pity for weakness. Wituwamat hath decreed the death of the pale faces at Wessagussetts."

"Then will the people of Plymouth call loudly for vengeance, that he hath taken the lives of their brethren." The visitor spoke stolidly. He might have been carved from stone so little animation did he show.

"The people of Plymouth shall first pay the penalty," said the sachem taking up the knife and making a fierce stab downward. Then, a shade regretfully, he offered it to his visitor. It was but one item of his bribe from Wituawmat, yet he hated to part with it.

"This is the reward of the brave who will slay the pale-face captain," he said.

The Cap-Codd Indian regarded it with interest, but made no move to take it. He knew well what was being asked of him, but he wished to assure himself the risk did not overbalance the reward.

"He is like to a fox," the chieftain went on rapidly. "Go to him and tell him that this tribe plot his downfall with Wituwamat. He will believe, because, like a fox, he hath already scented the danger from afar. He will call you 'friend.'" He spat upon the ground. "Go with him. Say that, having betrayed your brothers, you fear to stay here lest vengeance fall. Then, when the fox slumbers, give one sure stab, choosing well the spot, and creep at once into the woods returning here where great honors wait."

The plan made all seem easy. The brave eyed the knife longingly, then suddenly snatched it and hid it under his deer-skin.

"I go," he said, and stalked from the wigwam while the chieftain looked after him through half-closed lids.

At the landing-place all had been amicable enough. The Indians had corn to trade, but not all that was needed for the two settlements; so Standish decided to sail on to another village or two before he returned to Plymouth.

When the Cap-Codd Indian came to him with his tale he might have heard him with suspicion had not the story fitted so well with what he had divined.

"We will take this brave with us," he told his men unhesitatingly. So far the plot worked without a hitch.

Standish had done his share of the labor of the expedition and when darkness fell he was tired and among the first to prepare for sleep, as the Indian noted with satisfaction.

The shallop had been drawn in to the shore, the men's firearms, laid within easy reach, had been covered with sailcloth to keep off the dew, all was ready for the night, and Myles laid himself down, but sleep would not come. There was something amiss. What, he could not say, but it would not let him rest. He jumped to his feet and made the rounds of the little camp. All seemed peaceful, and he threw himself down again a little apart from the others who circled the campfire, that he might not be disturbed by their uneasy turning in their sleep.

This time he seemed likely to be more successful in wooing slumber and he was just drifting off when he heard an agonized cry.

"Myles! Myles! Danger!" it said.

He leaped to his feet, sword in hand, and slashed about him blindly. He saw naught, but steel met steel and something went hurtling through the air toward the water.

For a moment he was minded to raise the camp, but that within him that was trained to sense danger told him that the peril was past. He would sleep no more that night however, but betook himself to the strip of

beach where he could walk up and down and keep an eye upon the boat and camp.

"Barbara was right," he thought, "and I was wrong, when I forgot to keep my promise to sleep like a cat."

When day broke the men roused one by one to see their captain by the shallop looking with questioning eyes at a large hunting-knife standing up, with its point deeply embedded in the planking of his seat.

"Doth anyone lay claim to this fine knife?" asked Myles, not looking at their Indian guest who stood with the others, curiously regarding his find. "No? Then, as it was doubtless sent out of compliment to me, I will accept it with thanks.

He stuck it in his belt and there wore it for the remainder of the journey, having recognized it at once as the plaything of his friend the sachem.

CHAPTER XXII

DAME BREWSTER GIVETH MYLES UNWELCOME NEWS

WITH considerable corn to add to the general store Myles returned safely to Plymouth and, even before he stopped at his home, went in search of the Governor.

"What 's the news from Winslow?" he asked, as soon as their greetings were over.

"Bad news for us, I fear," Bradford answered gloomily. "He hath sent back a messenger to say that Massasoit is either dead or dying. However, he is pressing on and can be trusted to try to make terms with the great chieftain's successor. What is your news budget?"

"I 've brought corn," Standish said. "I also brought this." He threw the knife on the table and Bradford started away from its naked blade.

"How camest thou by that?" he asked.

Briefly Standish told the tale of the sachem's unfriendliness and how he had disarmed an unseen assassin, and Bradford bowed his head and offered thanks to the Lord who had once more protected his elect from the heathen.

"What is the next step to be taken?" Bradford asked. "The Massachusetts Indians need a lesson-

ing; but we have not the numbers necessary to proceed against that great tribe."

"Then must we do without numbers. I had intended to be off today," Standish answered, "but now I scarce think I should move from here till we hear from Winslow. Yet the settlers at Wessagusetts must be warned," he paced up and down restlessly. "It might be well if you gave orders for the shallop to be provisioned and held in readiness," he suggested; "meanwhile, I will go home and make my arrangements there; then, when word is received from Winslow, I can set off at once."

Myles turned toward home anticipating that Barbara would be there to meet him, but the house was open and empty and he came forth sorely disappointed.

Mistress Brewster, large and comely, vigorously shaking a rug outside her own door, caught his eye and he went over to her.

"Canst tell me where my little maid is?" he asked.

"She hath gone a-berrying with our Mary Chilton and some of the lads," the kindly woman answered. "John Winslow and Mary are to make a match of it, and Elizabeth and John Howland will not be long behind them. 'T is well my own daughters are to come out to me, for I 'll be lost without my three maids. I 'd like it well if one of my sons should take thy ward's fancy, captain. Giles Hopkins, to be sure followeth her like her shadow; but he is only a boy in her eyes."

"She 's but a child herself," snorted Myles, none too

pleased that his ward should be parceled off with one or another.

"Tell that to Francis Eaton or to Master Allerton," laughed Mistress Brewster. "Nay, Captain Standish, thou canst not hope to keep the prettiest maid in the plantation unwed much longer. The lads are round her like bees around a rose." Chuckling to herself at the dismay in Myles' face, Mistress Brewster took herself and her rug within doors, and Standish strolled back to his house again, intending to await Barbara's coming.

He seated himself upon the doorstep and went over what he had just heard in his mind. So Eaton and Allerton were looking at Barbara with admiring eyes! Well, they might save their praise for those who wanted it. Barbara was not for them — men with families to hang upon her young shoulders. And then he bethought him of a sudden of the night when he had sent John Alden courting for him. How had she put it? She had said that it was Remember Allerton she had had in mind. That it was her father who should wed. . . .

"Pshaw!" said Myles out loud. "There 's no fool like an old fool! I know not the man's age, but he seemeth vastly older than I do."

Here his reflections were brought to a conclusion by the arrival of young John Cooke, blown with running.

"The Governor beggeth that thou wilt come at once, good captain," he managed to say between gasps.

"There is word brought from Master Winslow!"

This put all thought of anything else out of Standish's head, for, to his mind, the situation of the little colony, girt round as it was with hostile tribes of Indians, was perilous in the extreme; and he hastened to the council-board.

"'T is word from Winslow," Bradford stated briefly, "and all is as thou surmised, or worse. Wituwamat hath persuaded most of the neighboring tribes against us."

"Nay," said Elder Brewster, "we must put our trust in the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever. Hath He not delivered us from the hand of the oppressor? When we wandered in the desert wilderness did He not ever have a care over us? Let us confess before the Lord His loving kindness and His wonderful works before the sons of men."

Piously the little band joined him in his prayer; but at its end Myles was alert for Winslow's news.

"He found Massasoit seemingly near to death," Bradford explained, "but he won his way in to him and, by the use of broths and simples such as he had seen Master Fuller take advantage of, he hath so far recovered him that Massasoit now loveth him like a brother and hath revealed to him a plot directed first against Wessagussets, and then, when the savages have secured such arms as the Weston settlers possess, against us. I vow we will have no peace, Myles, till this Wituwamat is dead. I would thou wouldst bring me his head in a basket."

Standish jumped to his feet and clapped on his cap. "I 'm off," he said. "I need to know no more. You 're safe from Massasoit. An we return not, you must prepare to defend yourselves against the Massachusetts. Belike Winslow can get aid there from Massasoit, who hath no honest love for the tribes to the North of him. Fare ye well."

"Go and God go with you?" said Elder Brewster, and as Standish and those who were to accompany him hurried toward the landing-place the men who remained behind dropped on their knees to pray for the safety of the doughty little expedition.

Determined that if the tiny town was thrown upon its own resources for defence it should have all the help he could spare it, Standish stripped himself of his best artillerists and made ready to take but eight men with him on this, which he well knew to be the most dangerous undertaking, of his long career.

Just as he was about to embark he heard flying footsteps behind him and turned to see Barbara, flushed and panting, at his elbow.

"I was gathering berries," she faltered. "Oh, Myles, thou wouldst have gone without bidding me farewell."

"Nay, then," said Standish, smiling, "I had not yet been welcomed home."

"I did not expect thee," Barbara explained. "They told me thou wouldst go all about the bay for corn and might be gone two days more or perhaps even three."

"Contrary winds forced our return sooner than we had planned."

"I knew that thou wert safe." Barbara smiled happily. "Once the day dawned after that frightful night."

Myles started undisguisedly.

"What knowest thou of that night?" he asked her.

"I spent it on my knees," said Barbara. "A great danger hung over thee, Myles. Mayhap it was but a foolish imagining, yet it seemed to me that if I watched all night I might know when it was about to fall and warn thee."

"What befell?" asked Standish as the girl hesitated in her account.

"I know not," she faltered. "All was not clear, but it seemed to me that I must try to keep thee from sleeping. Something, some one, was waiting to mischief thee. So I watched; but, despite my utmost endeavor, in the end slumber overtook thee. Then it was that a great snake with a sharp fang began to creep toward thee and at last, just as it was about to strike, I shrieked aloud in anguish. 'Myles! Myles! Danger!'"

"And thereafter?" Myles was watching her face as if fascinated.

"It seemed to me that I saw thee spring up fully armed to meet what threatened and my fear was gone," the girl told him. "Moreover I had waked Desire with my outcry and she bade me come to bed and, when I would not, she happed a

woolen sheet about me, so that I fear I slept on my knees."

"Thy outcry wakened more than Desire," Standish told her gravely. "I know those who would call it witchcraft, so spread not the tale abroad; but I heard thy voice as clear as I heard it but now, and it saved me from a very present danger."

"Then it was no witchcraft, but the mercy of the Lord our God," said Barbara devoutly.

"Go thou home and render thanks for both of us," Myles told her.

"Whither goest thou?" Barbara asked, as she turned to do his bidding.

"I have a matter to drive home to the understanding of the Massachusetts Indians," replied Myles, "but fear naught for me. I go but to return — to thee."

For a moment his eyes held hers and then he spoke with one of the sudden lapses into boyishness that were so dear to her.

"I say, Bab, till I come again, thou wilt not go a-sweethearting with any of the lads. Thou art too young for it, my child, at fourteen years."

He ran down the slope and leaped into the boat, and Barbara looked after him indignantly.

"At fourteen years!" she exclaimed. "Is Myles a lack-wit that he thinketh a maid stayeth fourteen forever?" Then she turned and walked up the road toward home, but her step was martial and had Myles been at hand he would have doubtless been given a stout piece of her mind.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LITTLE CAPTAIN

THE trip to Wessagussetts was uneventful and once arrived Captain Standish determined to bide his time. The Indians meant to strike soon he knew, but it seemed unlikely that they would choose a day when he and his men, whose reputation could not be unknown to them, were visiting the settlement.

He had taken with him some grain which was sorely needed, for nothing could make Weston's men aught but improvident; and he settled himself and his party to watch events.

It was at once apparent that not only were the settlers absolutely ignorant of the plot against them, but that their spirit was so broken through their lack of hardihood and general self-indulgence that they were more apt to hinder than to help him if advised of their danger.

Plainly, on his force alone rested the safety of the two settlements.

The Indians, at first somewhat awed by his coming, grew bolder under his inaction. Emissaries arrived to spy upon the strangers and these, finding the men from New Plymouth silent and unaggressive, remained to brag and returned to Wituwamat who had sent them, to report that the pale-faces had hearts as white as

their skins. They would never fight, they dared not!

So frequently was this story brought to him that Wituwamat determined to see these English soldiers who had been delivered into his hands and judge for himself.

Painted as for war, he walked in upon them where, meek and subdued, they sat about the guest-room.

The Indian visitors who were there ahead of him were spurred to greater daring by his presence and a desire to win his approval, and Wituwamat was not behindhand in the game of brag. He drew his long knife from its sheath and fondled it lovingly, addressing it as he might have well-loved papoose.

"By and by it should see. By and by it should eat. It needed not to speak," he said. "Food it should have, and drink."

Pecksuot, another brave, not to be outdone, strutted up and down in front of Standish himself, sneering at him openly.

"Standish is a great captain; but he is a little, little man. Pecksuot, though no sachem, is a man of great strength and courage, tall and noble of figure. Pecksuot cannot match Standish with words, but his arm is strong and his blood is red. Is it not strange that such a little man should be so great a captain?"

Over and over again the brave rung the changes on this theme, until Standish's own soldiers marveled at his forbearance. It was not their captain's way to be long-suffering.

But Standish well knew that the safety of the lives

of both plantations depended upon his making no mistake when he struck, and at last his moment came.

The hour for the noon-meat had sounded. The Indians, greedy eaters, swaggered off one by one to be among the first at table.

But Pecksuot lingered, loth to leave his silent victim. Wituwamat, too, was gloating over the humiliation of the far-famed captain of the pale-faces, and two of his lesser chieftains remained at his side. Then, at last, Standish gave his signal.

His soldiers filed from the room till but four white men remained face to face with the four Massachusetts braves. Those who had gone closed the door behind them and, with snaphances ready, mounted guard without, that none might enter to interfere with a fair fight.

Within, Hobomok, Massasoit's envoy, lounged against the wall and watched with narrow, glittering eyes all that went on.

Hardly had the door closed ere Standish leaped from his chair straight for Pecksuot's throat, and each white engaged the redskin he had marked as his opponent.

Around his neck Pecksuot, who towered above the little captain, wore a knife which he had sharpened to a point against the day when he bragged that he meant to use it to cut out pale-faces' hearts.

This Standish dragged from its sheath before its owner could reach for it, and there ensued a terrific struggle. Back and forth the men swayed, and all in the room knew well that no quarter would be given or asked on either side.

Trampling shoes and the soft pad of moccasins raised a dust that hung in the air like a haze, while the writhing figures of the opponents turned and twisted as in some weird dance.

Only Hobomok took no hand in the fray, leaning against the wall as motionless and silent as though a part of it.

Suddenly Standish drew back his arm and struck with all his force, driving Pecksuot's knife up to the hilt in his bare breast. The Indian threw his arms wide, his body turned in a half circle like a leaf whirled in the wind, and he crashed to the floor dead.

Standish wasted not so much as a look on him, but hastened to see how it fared with his men. Wituwamat, driven into a corner, put up his hands as if begging for mercy. His panting opponent half turned to Standish for leave to grant it, saying apologetically, "He may yet repent. I like not to cut him off, deep in sin." And, having caused the man to relax his vigilance, the treacherous savage seized that moment to make a desperate stab at his generous foe. But the little captain's quick eye had seen what was coming. With drawn sword he bounded forward and pinned Wituwamat to the wall behind him, just as his Pilgrim opponent, assured that his pity was misplaced, gave him the coup de grâce.

One other man had already paid his debt, and the fourth and last was driven to his knees but too proud to plead for his life.

"Bind him!" Standish commanded. "I do not

promise mercy. He shall have a fair trial, but that is the most I can offer."

This brave being secured, Standish now ordered the doors to be thrown wide.

"We are here to offer entertainment to any of the Massachusetts who care to taste of our hospitality," he said, seating himself with his back turned contemptuously toward the traitorous Wituwamat's body.

Most of the Indians slunk off when they learned how the affray had ended; but there were a few who, incredulous, remained to look within the doors.

To these, still lounging in his place against the wall, Hobomok addressed himself.

"This morning Pecksuot bragged of his strength and stature; but, ere the sun hath touched the horizon, the little captain he mocked hath laid him on the ground."

Leaderless, the Massachusetts were thoroughly cowed and sent a deputation to Standish begging for Wituwamat's body.

"That much you shall have," Standish told them grimly, "but his head is my gift to our good Governor. An you want that you must e'en come and take it, for I shall mount it above our stockade where you cannot fail to find it."

The trial of the remaining Indian was held a few days later. He was duly condemned of treachery most base and hanged as an additional reminder to the Massachusetts, if one were needed, that they would do well to deal fairly with the whites.

After this it would have been quite safe for the Wessagussetts settlers had they had any spirit or any leader to command them. But poor creatures such as they, were unfit to stay alone, and so Standish told them right plainly.

Little as they were wanted at Plymouth he offered to carry them there, at the same time warning them that they must be prepared to submit to the strict discipline of that colony. As an alternative, for he saw that they had no more love for the Pilgrims than they for them, he suggested that they embark in their own large boat, which was good and serviceable, and join the fishing fleet off Monhegan, where they might hope to secure passage for England.

This proposal met with their approval; but it was not until he had shipped them off, that he felt free to return to Plymouth, carrying the head of Wituwamat packed in an Indian basket filled with the red, aromatic embalming powder of which the savages had the secret.

On reaching Plymouth Captain Standish went straightway to the council-chamber and sent some of the admiring boys who dogged his steps to summon the various members of the council.

He was impatient to be done with his business; but no more impatient was he than Bradford and the others to hear his report, and they now came hurrying in from every direction.

"What fortune hast thou to report?" Bradford asked breathlessly.

"Bad! Bad!" said Standish, pulling a long face.

"I 've ruined my business as a soldier for years to come."

"The Lord our God be praised," said Elder Brewster. "Let us glorify Him forever nor forget to whom we owe this mercy. So there was no bloodshed?"

"None to speak of," Standish answered carelessly. "The ring-leaders were cut off, no more."

"Nay, then," said Elder Brewster, his kindly face falling, "I fear our reverend pastor's reprimand when I send him word of this happening! It will be a sore grief to him. I know not what he will say."

"Right well do I know what he will say," Governor Bradford put in. "'How happy a thing would it have been had you converted some ere you had killed any.' Those will be his words. The Reverend Master Robinson is in Leyden and knoweth not the savages."

"Thou art right, Will," said Standish approvingly, "a lesson was needed. There was no manner of doubt of that. It was their lives or ours, and none can blame us seriously that we struck a shrewd blow for our homes and families."

"None will!" Master Allerton spoke positively, and Standish rose to go.

"Thou art forgetting thy basket, Myles," Bradford reminded him. "What 's in it? Wild duck's eggs?"

"Nay," said Standish, "that is an egg that will hatch no more evil schemes. 'T is what thou asked me to bring thee, Will." He pushed the basket toward the Governor.

"And what is that?" asked Bradford, who had quite forgotten the wish he had expressed at their last meeting.

"'T is the head of Wituwamat," said Standish, surprised at his lack of memory. "When set above our palisadoes 'twill be a fine warning to those who plot against us."

And then, his public duties discharged, the faithful soldier marched off about his own affairs.

CHAPTER XXIV

MYLES SPEAKETH FOR HIMSELF

AT his own home Myles found Desire very busy about her baking. She carefully dusted her hands in the mixing-bowl lest any of the precious flour be wasted, and turned to greet him.

"Where is Barbara?" was his first question. He always felt defrauded if the girl was not there to meet him upon his return.

"She hath gone forth with Constanta and Giles Hopkins," Desire answered, "and right glad am I, for I want a word alone with thee."

"Dost thou not even ask me if we subdued the savages?" Myles asked, in pretended surprise.

"I do not," returned Desire, "for I know right well thou wilt claim the credit — thou and thy bloody-minded soldiery; whereas to God the glory for His care over His redeemed."

"Nay, I claim no more than to be the humble instrument." Standish was usually amused by his tilts with Desire, in which there was no ill feeling on either side, but now he wished but to be told where Barbara was and to be off to meet her.

"There 's little humility about thee." Desire shook her head. "And I 've no time to bandy words, or to try to teach thee better, with my sponge already in the

bowl. 'T is this I wish to tell thee. I promised myself that I would not desert Barbary till she was wed; but she is very choosing and over long about it; so, when the next ship comes, I 'm for home."

"But I 'm not anxious to have the girl leave me for some gawky lout," Myles burst out.

"'T will be a man wins her and no lanky youth," Desire retorted, irritably.

"Tell me who it is she hath set her heart upon?" he asked dolefully.

"Nay then, an thou art as slow of wit at thy fighting as thou showest thyself about thy home, I wonder they have made thee captain of this colony," Desire cried. "I am impatient with thy stupidity."

She turned back to her work, but relented enough to call back over her shoulder, "Thou wilt find her with Humility and the two young Hopkinses in the south field, berrying."

For a moment Myles Standish stood motionless, then of a sudden his face beamed with a broad smile.

"Is that what thou hast in mind?" he asked enigmatically.

"Nay, concern not thyself with what may be in my mind," Desire answered sourly. "I have told thee where Barbary may be found. Were I in thy place I should seek her, instead of gossiping with a busy spinster."

With a boyish shout Myles strode across the room and taking hold of the young woman kissed her soundly.

"That, in thanks for thy good heart!" he cried. "Thou wilt ever have a friend in Myles Standish." And he quitted the house on the run to find Barbara.

The girl, flushed and sunburnt, came gladly to meet him.

"Myles!" she exclaimed. "'T is balm to my heart to see thee back, although I knew that all was well with thee," she added, dropping her voice that the others might not hear.

"Aye, all was well till I came home," Standish said. "And thou art no gladder to see me than I am to set eyes on thee."

"What 's amiss at home?" Barbara demanded.

"Come sit by me on this boulder and I will tell thee." Myles brushed the stone with his hand and she obediently perched herself beside him, setting her half-filled berry pottle down within reach.

"'T is Desire. She saith it is her purpose to go home over seas."

Barbara started.

"That 's news to me," she said gravely. "But perchance she 'll be happier there, though we shall miss her sorely," she added.

"That is not all she said," Myles went on; "and, even before I went to Wessagusetts, Mistress Brewster was as bad."

Barbara looked at him keenly, then she laughed and her white teeth seemed very brilliant in her brown face, for the girl was one of those rare blondes who burn brown, not red.

"She told thee that it was time I was wed and thou art much put about lest she and Mistress Brewster fill my childish head with such like idle thoughts."

"Now how knewest thou that?" cried Myles. "I vow thou art a witch, after all."

"Nay then," said Barbara, dimpling, "they 're not the only ones who have whispered it into my ears. First there 's —"

She held up a spread hand seeming to name over the suitors she had in mind as she counted them on her fingers.

"And ——, makes two. Then there 's —— makes three. He 's tall and good-looking, Myles," she mused, giving the man beside her a glance. "And then there 's ——, who makes four. That 's all. But four have offered themselves to me."

"But four!" exclaimed Myles. "But four! My word, hath this colony gone mad? Four men trying to wed a chit of a child scarce fourteen years of age."

Barbara's face suddenly changed and grew stern. She had heard all she meant to of her fourteen years.

"'T is thou who hast some strange kink in thy brain." She slipped to her feet and stood before him, not overly tall to be sure, and slim and shapely, but none the less in those days of storm and stress when all developed early, unmistakably no child. "How many years, I pray you tell me, dost think a maid stays fourteen?"

Myles removed his steel cap and rubbed his forehead sheepishly.

"How old art thou, Bab?" he asked.

"I 'm seventeen and more, Master Captain Standish." Barbara bobbed him a curtsey. "Full old enough to wed, an I 'm so minded. Indeed just now I overheard Constanta and Humility arguing as to whether I was not entitled to rank as a spinster like Desire. Smilingly she looked after her friends, who had wandered far afield.

"Thou an old maid!" Gazing into her glowing face Myles was driven to laugh at the idea, then he took her hand gravely enough.

"Which one is to rob me of my little maid?" he said. "I could perchance give names to them if I were so minded, but we 'll count them off as thou didst. Is it —?"— he tipped the little finger to one side — "young and slim; or is it —, a well-found young man? Or —?"— he touched the middle finger —"tall and good-looking thou saidst he was. Or —? A forward and pushing young man, if I mistake not." He paused, trying to make her eyes meet his.

"I — I don't think I wish to marry, after all," said Barbara in a rather small voice.

"Nay then," said Standish, "thou canst scarce escape it. There 's Mistress Brewster, a most notable match-maker, hath thee under her eye. Look how well she hath arranged to settle her three orphans. And even Desire proclaimeth thee 'very choosing.'

"Dost want to be rid of me, Myles?" Barbara gave him a quick glance from the corner of her eye.

"Nay, I should not go so far as to say that," he returned, "but I have lately been converted to the idea

that 't is time my ward was wed. Now I am no managing matron but I have a match in mind for thee."

An anxious expression dawned on Barbara's face. Whom could Myles mean?

But he went on regardless.

"'T is one of the highest in this colony. He hath long regarded thee with an approving eye."

At this Barbara's thoughts ran wild. It could n't be Governor Bradford?

"He is my oldest and dearest friend."

(It was Governor Bradford.)

"I think there is none who would dare to speak ill of him while I am by."

(Alas! Alas! John had told her that Myles had said he would have no difficulty in proposing marriage for another. She could not, could not wed Bradford; yet how dared she refuse the Governor?)

Myles laid his finger on her thumb.

"Now this will stand for him right well," he said complacently. "He 's not so tall as some, but he 's sturdy. He goeth about his business in his own way, and I think he hath his uses. Wilt have him, Barbara?"

"I think not, an it please thee, Myles," the girl said, standing trembling before him.

Standish cast her hand from him and rose to his feet.

"But it pleaseth me not at all!" he cried wrathfully.

"Nay, Myles," Barbara spoke gently, "I would like to pleasure thee in this as in all else, but surely a woman

should not wed unless her heart speaketh for the man. Governor Bradford is well-nigh a stranger to me."

"Now who said ere a word of Will Bradford?"

"Thou didst," declared Barbara. "Saidst thou not thy 'oldest and dearest friend?'"

"Nay then," said Standish, seizing her berry-stained hand once more, and pointing to the thumb, "I should not call Bradford small, and the man I have in mind is called so, although to my knowledge he hath ever proved big enough to stand up for the rights of himself and others. Wilt have him, Barbara?"

Again the girl shook her head.

"Thou once said thou couldst plead ably for another, and 't was the truth; but I will take no man who cannot do his own wooing."

"I plead for another? *I!*" exclaimed Myles. "Dost take me for a zany like Alden, to beg for another, what I find I have unwittingly wanted for myself these many moons? Nay then, Bab, I know what thou art thinking of, and I give thee a soldier's word that the only thing he is afraid of asking for is something he doth not want and fears will be accorded to him. Myles Standish speaketh for himself now. Wilt take him and make him the happiest man in all this plantation?"

Barbara released her hand and held it up with the thumb and four fingers extended, regarding it quizzically.

"I think I 'll have to, Myles," she said. "I know that it is a sin to be superstitious, but I pin my faith

to the luck in odd numbers," and she kissed her thumb.

When they at last went home to Desire, she met them with her queer twisted smile.

"Now I 'm well content," she said. "I will see you twain wed ere I go."

"Must thou go, Desire?" Barbara threw an arm about her tenderly. "I will miss thee sorely, and so will the little Allertons."

"Nay," said Desire, "their aunt, Mistress Priest, is coming on the next ship. My work here is done and I shall be happier away. I know I leave thee in sure hands and I ask no more."

She went from the room while Myles and Barbara looked after her with loving comprehension. Then they turned to find a new world in each other's eyes.

THE END